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THE REASONABLENESS OF Perſonal Reformation, And the NECESSITY OF CONVERSION;

The true Methods of making all Men happy in this World, and in the World to come. Seaſonably diſcourſed, and earneſtly preſſed upon this Licentious Age.

By *J. F.* A ſincere lover of his Native Countrey, and the Souls of Men.

Levit. 26. 23, 24, 25. *And if ye will not be reformed by theſe things, but will walk contrary unto me: then will I alſo walk contrary unto you, and will puniſh you yet ſeven times for your ſins. And I will bring a ſword upon you, that ſhall avenge the quarrel of my Covenant.*

Iſa. 48. 18. *Oh that thou hadſt hearkened to my Commandments! then had thy peace been as a River, and thy righteouſneſs as the waves of the Sea.*

LONDON:
Printed for **Thomas Cockerill**, at the *Three Legs* in the *Poultrey*, over againſt the *Stocks-Market*. 1691.

To all ſuch as are moſt immediately and particularly concerned in the following Treatiſe, of what Rank or Quality ſoever they be.

Gentlemen,

TWO of the greateſt, faithfulleſt, and moſt intimate Friends in the World, *Reaſon* and *Conſcience*, command me here in their Names, courteouſly to ſalute and invite you in.

They earneſtly deſire three or four Hours ſerious and private conference with you about ſome very important Perſonal Concerns of yours, which cannot admit of denial, or long delay. And if you make any trifling excuſes, they have commanded and inſtructed me here to anſwer them.

In caſe of abſolute and obſtinate refuſal to hear them, they order me to tell you, If you will not talk with them now, they'll talk with you ſhortly whether you will or no. If you ſay, you are not now at leiſure, having other buſineſs to do; they both deſire you to conſider, *Firſt*, You can have no Buſineſs in the World of equal importance with theirs. *Secondly*, That whatever other lawful Affairs you are purſuing, their Buſineſs with you will no way obſtruct, but greatly promote it. And *Laſtly*, That a greater Perſon than any of you loſt his Life by pocketing up a Letter at Night, ſaying, *To morrow is a new Day*; and it proved to him indeed *Dies noviſſima*, his laſt Day, he loſing by that Neglect the only Opportunity of living longer.

If you demand how your Reaſon came to be bound up in this little Book, and ſay, That which is Reaſon

to

to this Author, may be folly and non-ſenſe to you; I am bid to tell you, you are obliged firſt to read and compare, elſe your own Reaſon will preſently call it your own folly and non-ſenſe ſo to pronounce. Sound Reaſon is uniform, and like it ſelf all the World over. Its true Laws and Dictates equally oblige one, as another, in like caſes and circumſtances.

If you ſay, there have been ſome Jars and Diſguſts betwixt you, and your Reaſons and Conſciences; you and they have fallen out ſo oft, that you have no great fancy to come near them in private, for you expect nothing but harſh and chideing Language from them, and therefore are fain by continual Diverſions and quick Succeſſions of Buſineſs, to maintain your Peace, by keeping at as great a diſtance from them as you can.

'Tis their deſire you ſhould here know, *Firſt*, That their debates with you will be as calm and friendly, as they are ſeaſonable and neceſſary. *Secondly*, That they both profeſs (and you may believe them) they neither do, nor can deſign any thing but your good. *Thirdly*, That that Perſon is certainly in a very bad Caſe, that cannot endure to converſe with himſelf. *Fourthly*, That you herein deny a Civility to your own Reaſons and Conſciences, which you daily pay to Strangers and Inferiors. And in a Word, that they deſire a reconciliation with you, upon as fair and honourable terms, as can well be deſired. And that this being done, they will both ſtick faithfully by you in all the troubles and dangers of your Lives, and follow you as your inſeparable Friends, into any thing but Sin.

If you ſay, This is but a Wheedle to draw you into a Book, that will make you melancholy, and perhaps mad.

'Tis their Senſe and Judgment, that of all men living, you have leaſt reaſon to pretend the one or the other in this Caſe. For they are very confident you are now in the moſt Melancholy circumſtances men can ordinarily be in on this ſide Hell. And for Madneſs, they deſire to know what you your ſelves would call that man, that is running with ſuch poſthaſte to Hell (as will not admit of two or three hours ſtop upon the Road) to prove himſelf to be no Mad-man, but in his right mind and wits?

Moreover, they command me to inform you, It is their deſire, that ſeeing their debates with you will neither be tireſome nor impertinent, you will pleaſe to hear them out what

they have to ſay to you; and then if you ſhall find cauſe to complain that your Pleas and Excuſes are not fairly drawn, or that you have new Matter to furniſh a better Apology, they are both content you ſhall have your liberty to amend or add what you pleaſe; and if they be not able to refute them, they'll give you no further trouble or interruption in your courſe.

This, Gentlemen, is what I have in charge to ſay to you in the *Porch*; and now if you pleaſe, the Door is open; you may be as private as you will. They'll attend you to your Bed-chamber or Cloſet; and I heartily wiſh an happy iſſue to this friendly debate.

J. F.

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THE REASONABLENESS OF Perſonal Reformation,

CHAP. I.

The Introduction and State of the Caſe.

SECT. I.

REaſon exalts Man above all earthly Beings: 'Tis his Dignity and Priviledge that God hath furniſhed him with Abilities of Mind to recollect, animadvert, compare, infer, ponder and judge his own Actions. Hereby he becomes not only capable of Moral Government by Humane Laws, which no Creature beſide him is; but alſo of Spiritual Government by Divine Laws; and the bleſſed Fruitions of God in Glory, which no other *Species* of Creatures (Angels only excepted) have a ſubjective capacity for.

Right Reaſon by the Law of Nature (as an home-born Judge) arbitrates and determines all things within its proper Province, which Pro-

vince is extended far and wide. All Actions Natural, Moral and Civil are weighed at this Beam and Standard: None are exempted but matters of supernatural Revelation; and yet even these are not wholly and in every respect exempt from Right Reason. For though there be some Mysteries in Religion above the sphere and flight of Reason, yet nothing can be found in Religion that is unreasonable.

And though these Mysteries be not of natural investigation, but of supernatural Revelation; yet Reason is convinced nothing can be more reasonable, than that it take its place at the feet of Faith, which is but to suffer it self to become *Pupil* to an Omniscient and Infallible Instructor. The resolution of our Reason into Faith, and of Faith into God's Veracity, are Acts highly becoming Reasonable Beings in such Cases as these.

It may not pry too nicely into unrevealed Mysteries, demand the Reasons, or examine the Causes of them, (as bold and daring *Socinians* do) but it feels it self obliged to receive all those things both as possible and true which God hath revealed, counting his Revelation alone to be Reason sufficient. For the *Veracity* of God takes out of Reasons mouth all Objections against the *truth* of them, and his Almighty *Power* silences all its Scruples against the *possibility* of them.

But in all Matters properly under the jurisdiction of Reason, every man is obliged to account with himself, as well as others, for the reasonableness of his own Actions; and that Act which will not endure the test of sound Reason, it judges not fit for the entertainment of a Man. If Reason

Reaſon cannot juſtifie it, 'tis beneath the rank and dignity of a Man to do it.

SECT. II.

The Light of Reaſon was at firſt the bright Lamp or Candle of the Lord, till Sin like a Thief melted it down to a Snuff; whereby (comparatively ſpeaking) it is become a poor glimmering Light in the beſt of men, and almoſt quite extinguiſhed in ſome men. Fallen Man is become leſs than himſelf, and will never act like himſelf, till he be fully reſtored to himſelf.

Sanctification indeed ſnuffs and trims the Lamp of Reaſon; but there being few ſanctified Perſons among men, a double Miſery conſequently befalls a very great part of Mankind: whoſe Converſation ſpeaks them not only deſtitute of Religion, which bereaves them of the bleſſedneſs of the World to come; but men almoſt entirely deſpoiled of the Benefits and Bleſſings of their own Reaſon, which makes them unhappy and miſerable in this World: Beaſts, rather than Men, as the ſacred Scripture ſtiles them: Unreaſonable men, men fallen out with their own faculties, who after many a ſharp battel with their Reaſon, are now dragging it like a conquered Captive, at the Chariot-wheels of their victorious and triumphant Luſts.

SECT. III.

'Tis ſcarce imaginable that ever Sin ſhould prevail ſo far as it doth to the very unmanning of men, did they not firſt delude and bribe their

Reason by close and cunning Applications to their bewitched Affections; whereby though they cannot make it a *party*, yet they make it stand by as a silent Spectator or *Neuter*, whilst they act the Beast, yea, the Devil rather than the Man.

We little know how far unsanctified Reason may this way be prevailed upon to quit its Throne, and resign its Scepter into the hands of Lust and appetite; yea, to engage in the defence of their most absurd Laws and Dictates. It only serves in some men to invent excuses, pleas and specious pretences, to justifie or extenuate their beast-like actions; the basest servitude it can be condemned to.

If this will not do, sensual Lusts have another way to obtain their satisfaction in despite of Reason and Conscience, even by stopping their ears to the voices of both, and pushing on with a brutish *impetus*, they suffer neither to enjoy the opportunity of a calm debate of these matters with them.

SECT. IV.

But let men do what they will, 'tis next to an impossibility they should so far subdue and destroy those inbred Principles of Reason and Conscience, but that they will at one time or other give them some checks and oppositions in their profane courses, especially when they shall get the advantage of some eminent distress, or special danger; which disposes them to lend an ear to their voices; and there be few men in the World, but are sometimes providentially cast into such cases and conditions.

So

So that appeals to the Reaſon of the moſt profligate wretches are not altogether vain and uſeleſs. For if the caſe cannot be tryed and decided at the bar of Reaſon and Conſcience one time, it may with more advantage at another; and haply Appeals to Reaſon may produce Reformation in ſome men, ſooner than Appeals to the Scriptures, or Principles of Faith; eſpecially when the World is ſo notoriouſly drenched in practical Atheiſm, that ſerious Religion becomes the common ſubject of drollery amongſt multitudes of men.

Yet it were hard and uncharitable to imagine any man ſunk ſo deep into the mire of beſtiality and profaneneſs, as not ſtill to retain ſome value and veneration for his own Reaſon, and as much as he abuſes it, yet to refuſe the whole world in exchange for it; and to account it a greater miſery to be utterly deprived of it, than to have the hooſs of an Horſe given him in exchange for his Hands and Feet.

SECT. V.

The Scriptures therefore do in many caſes appeal to the Reaſon of Sinners, and deſign their reformation by ſuch Appeals. For it being a moſt ſhameful thing for a man to be convicted at the bar of his own Reaſon, of acting like a beaſt rather than a man, every man is preſumed to be afraid and aſhamed of ſuch an Indictment. Such Miſcreants are the ſhame and reproach of Humanity it ſelf. They are branded for bruits throughout the ſober world. Their company declined and ſhun'd by all wiſe and good men. He that hath no reaſon to juſtifie his actions, may yet be

supposed to be owner of some stock of natural shame, which cannot but afford a blush upon such a plain conviction. This therefore was the course which the Prophet *Isaiah* took by divine direction, to reform the idolatrous *Israelites*, *Isa.* 46. 8. he states the case at the bar of their own Reason, and calls for a verdict upon it. The case was this; *Whether Idols having not power enough to shew themselves Gods, those that worship them must not want wisdom enough to shew themselves men? Remember this, and shew your selves men, and bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors! q. d.* for shame let not men act like *brutes, which have no animadversion.*

SECT. VI.

When things therefore are brought to such an exigence, that ruin or reformation is the only Choice men have to make, and all religious impressions so obliterated and worn out, that men pay no reverence to them; an Appeal to the Reason of men seems then to be an hopeful method of prevailing with them, to suffer a reformation rather than a ruin. Not that I imagine the *Topicks* of Reason able to afford more powerful Arguments than those of Religion do; but that they who by their ignorance, and strong prejudices against Religion, have made themselves more uncapable of conviction that way, may haply feel the force of Reason prevailing so far, at least, as to put their outragious lusts under some restraint.

As for the Scriptures, and serious Religion begotten by them in the souls of men, they are perfect strangers to all, but the names of these things: And even their very Names are grown almost ridicu-

diculous with them too. But Reaſon may convince and ſhame them. What force the Reaſon of man hath, even without ſaving grace, to produce Civility, Sobriety, and other Moral Vertues, is abundantly evident in the very *Heathens*, who by the only Light of Reaſon diſcovered ſo much odiouſneſs in Vice and Immorality, and ſuch amiable beauty in Juſtice, Temperance, and the other Moral Vertues, that their praiſes for them are ſounded throughout the world.

Now whatever unthinking men dream, to me it is evident, that when Kingdoms and Commonwealths are overflowed with unreſtrained Vices and Immoralities; when curſing and ſwearing becomes the common Language; Drunkenneſs and Adultery the common practices of the Inhabitants; God will either ſweep away the filth of thoſe Nations by the Beſom of a general Reformation, or he will ſweep away their Inhabitants out of them with the Beſom of Deſtruction. For if we have not excuſed the Notion and Belief of a God, and that he animadverts the wickedneſs of men (which the very *Heathens* by the Light of Nature, ſaw and acknowledged) we may thereby eaſily be led to this Concluſion, that ſuch overflowings of abomination do, and muſt certainly preſage our Deſolation, except ſpeedy and general Reformation do prevent it.

SECT. VII.

Now the perſons whoſe Reformation I particularly deſign by this method, being men that exerciſe more Reaſon than Religion, might (methinks) be prevailed with to take up at laſt, and

reform their unreasonable as well as ungodly courses, could they be once prevailed with to debate these matters with cool, considerative minds, becoming men governed by reason, not wholly swayed like bruit-beasts by lust and appetite.

And is it not highly reasonable, that men should weigh their own actions at the same beam and standard where they weigh other mens actions, and renounce all that with shame and detestation, which they themselves must censure as utterly beneath and unworthy of a man? Wherefore hath God planted a principle of Reason and Conscience within us? Is it rational to think it was planted there for no other end or use but to scan and censure other mens words and actions by, but not our own? Or to be wholly useful to other mens interests, without any benefit to our selves? Ask thine own Reason, silly man, why God placed it in thy Soul, and for what use it was intended, and it will tell thee, it was particularly designed and appointed to regulate and order thine own life and actions; and next, for the benefit and good of the Community. It will tell thee, there is not a single act thou dost of any weight or moment, but thou oughtest to consult with it, and have its Pass or License before thou do it. But when thou entrest into a series and course of actions, thy consultations with it ought to be very frequent and solemn, because these things are of great importance to thee.

Thy Reason will tell thee, Sinner, that it is a vile affront to it, to be thrust by thee from the Council-table, unworthily dismissed from its office, and discharged from any further attendance upon thy life, and the concerns thereof, and bruitish

riſh luſt and appetite conſulted in its room; and that it needed not at all to have been implanted into thy ſoul, if the ſame Principles that govern the beaſts of the field muſt alſo be thy governing Principles. It ſtands ready to offer its ſervice to thee, to ſave thee from, or to receive thee out of thoſe miſchiefs thou haſt or mayeſt run thy ſelf into; if thou wilt but hear and obey its advice. It tells thee, it is thy Privy-Councellor by God's appointment; and if thou wilt not find leiſure among the heats and hurries of thy luſts, to conſult it, and hearken to its counſels now; if thou wilt forſake the conduct of thine own Reaſon and Conſcience, which have a right and authority to govern thy words and actions, and follow thy blind and headſtrong luſts and paſſions, thou ſhalt hear other language from them, when thy luſts have precipitated thee into thine own ruin and deſtruction, as they ſpeedily and inevitably muſt and will do, according to the courſe they now ſteer for thee.

SECT. VIII.

And there is yet more ground to hope, that reaſon may prevail with men living under the Goſpel, to return to ſobriety and temperance, when we conſider their Reaſon is aſſiſted by ſome illumination from the Chriſtian Religion. They live in a Land of Bibles and Miniſters, where they cannot avoid the light; an advantage far beyond whatever the *Heathens* enjoyed, who yet by their ſingle unaſſiſted Reaſon arrived to an eminency in Moral Vertues.

Our Reaſons and Conſciences do not only convince us (as theirs alſo did them) that there is a God, and a future life of retribution, wherein every man ſhall be judged according to his works: but alſo, that the Scriptures are the very Word of God, and Rule of Faith and Manners. And if there be any among the debauched Crew that queſtion or deny it, we may be confident none of them are able by plain and ſound reaſon to overthrow thoſe mighty Arguments pleaded for the confirmation of that truth. At leaſt they find in themſelves a ſtrong ſuſpicion, and fear, that they may prove to be true; which jealouſie and ſuſpicion working together with their own Reaſon and Conſciences, are no contemptible helps towards their recovery.

For if what Reaſon, Conſcience and Scripture with one mouth pronounce, be true and certain, (as undoubtedly it will be found to be) then it muſt be plain and obvious to them alſo, that their brutiſh luſts have put them into the direct and ready way both to ruin *themſelves*, and alſo greatly to hazard the *Community to which they belong*.

SECT. IX.

As for themſelves, if they will make a judgment upon their own condition in the light of Reaſon, Conſcience, or Scripture, (and they very well know they take their meaſures in perfect darkneſs, if they take them not by this direction) then continuing the ſame courſe they now do, they are a loſt generation.

All their lawful and faithful guides tell them with one mouth, they are certainly in the broad way

way to damnation. And that how irkſome and terrible ſoever the thoughts and apprehenſions of Hell are to them, yet thither they muſt certainly come, if they purſue this courſe. Their Reaſon plainly tells them, he that chuſeth the means, and engageth in the way leading to Hell, muſt and ought to make account that Hell is the place he is preparing for.

Conſcience is as plain and poſitive with them, that they muſt either return or periſh. The Scripture confirms the teſtimonies of both, by telling them plainly, that *the end of theſe things is death*, Rom. 6. 21.

'Tis down-right folly and madneſs, by the vote of the whole rational and ſober world, for any man to conclude, or hope he ſhall be happy in the world to come, whoſe life is drawn through and finiſhed in all manner of obſcenity, filthineſs, and prophaneneſs in the preſent world.

For let the caſe be brought into the light of your own Reaſon, as dim as it is, and let it freely judge when you are belching out your black and horrid Blaſphemies againſt God, imprecating damnation from him upon your own ſouls, wallowing in beaſtly luſts, vomiting and roaring in Taverns and Alehouſes: Ask, I ſay, your own Reaſon, Conſcience, or the Scripture, whether all or either of them will allow you to ſay or think, *Now we are in the right way to eternal bleſſedneſs? This is the very courſe that will bring us to happineſs in the world to come: This pleaſeth God better, and is a ſurer path to glory, than Repentance or Faith, Mortification, Prayer, or Reformation.* No, no; as blind as your Reaſon is, and as ſeared as your Conſciences are, you will never bring them to comprobate or ſub-

subscribe such abfurd and horrid conclusions as these.

But on the contrary, they will tell you, That if you will have the pleasure, you must have the pain and torment of sin. That 'tis madness to say you are afraid to burn, but not afraid to sin: That you are loath to be damned, and yet challenge the Almighty God to his face to damn you; as much a folly as to drink a baneful Dose of known Poison, and think to feel no painful gripes afterwards.

As for the Scriptures, they appeal to the Reason of men in this case, as a most known and allowed thing, scarce imaginable to lie hid from any man, 1 Cor. 6. 9. *Know ye not, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.*

It would make the bowels of a compassionate Christian to rowl and yearn within him to behold multitudes of souls of invaluable worth, running greedily on to their eternal ruin, wilfully stopping their ears all the way to the voices of their own Reason and Conscience, as well as to the voice of God in his word, not once making a pause, till they fall into that gulph of eternal and intolerable misery, into which with great precipitation they are casting themselves.

SECT.

SECT. X.

And then for the Community to which they belong, how dangerous, yea, how deſtructive ſuch perſons are to it, cannot poſſibly be hid from any wiſe and ſerious obſerver. For if one Sinner deſtroys much good, if one *Achan* trouble the whole Camp of *Iſrael*, how much more will whole ſwarms and droves of drunkards, blaſphemers and adulterers, as now fill every place, pull down the judgments of God upon thoſe States and Kingdoms wherein they breathe? If our fears and dangers were greater than they are, yet Reformation might ſave us: *Jer.* 5. 1. *Run ye to and fro through the ſtreets of Jeruſalem, and ſee now and know, and ſeek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man,* (*i. e.* a publick man, a man in authority) *if there be any that executeth judgment, that ſeeketh the truth, and I will pardon it.* And if our hopes and confidences were much higher than they are, yet unreſtrained ſin would undo us. Kingdoms and Commonwealths are not ſo much endangered by the powers and policies of their enemies without them, as they are by the unreformedneſs of profligate wretches within and amongſt them. Reformation quickly recovers the Ancient Glory of Kingdoms, and makes them the terror of their Enemies.

For tho there will be ſtill too much ſin privately committed under the beſt Laws, and moſt vigorous and impartial execution of them; yet abundance of ſin would thereby be prevented, and the ſins that are committed would not become National, but perſonal only, and theſe would not ſo much concern

concern and hazard the publick weal and tranquility of the State.

Moreover, States and Kingdoms are in no small hazard by the publick debauchery and common prophaneness of their Subjects, for as much as in this very sink and puddle of their lusts, the manly wisdom, sprightly courage, and true gallantry of their Subjects are quenched and drowned, their Spirits softened and effeminated. 'Tis hard to imagine those men will engage far in the Cause of Reformation, when Reformation it self is the only thing they hate and fear.

Nor need we wonder to find men intimidated and low-spirited in times and places of eminent danger, who not only carry about them so much guilt (which is the fountain of fear) but are wholly addicted to sensual pleasures which they are loth to hazard upon publick accounts and considerations, these being the only Heaven they have, or hope for; *Whoredom and Wine, and new Wine take away the heart*, Hos. 4. 11. 'Tis in the very nature of these sins to make men sottish, and in the very nature of guilt to make them pusillanimous.

Seneca, Epist. 97.

Seneca observes (and his Observation is true) *That the conscience of a wicked man is a terrible scourge and torment to him, perpetually lashing him with solicitous thoughts and fears, so that he distrusts all securities, and knows not where to be safe.* Hence it comes to pass, that many men of good Extraction, Liberal Education, and Excellent Natural Endowments, become so useless, yea, so pernicious as they are; who could they be recovered but to temperance and sobriety, would become both excellently useful and ornamental to the Nation where they had

their

their birth, and to the ſafety and honour whereof they owe their ſervice.

SECT. XI.

This moſt deſirable recovery and reformation of prophane debauched perſons, is not ſimply and abſolutely impoſſible: And if Magiſtrates and Miniſters were every where exemplary themſelves for ſobriety and piety, zealous and impartial in the diſcharge of their reſpective Duties, a general Reformation would not be difficult. But when thoſe, whoſe Office it is to ſuppreſs wickedneſs, ſhall aſſociate themſelves with leud and profligate perſons, and vye with them in their prophane courſes, or diſcourage more conſciencious perſons in the diſcharge of their Duties; this makes Reformation morally impoſſible.

If Prophaneneſs were once found the general *Odium* of the people, and a bar to all Preferments, it might be hoped things would quickly alter for the better. 'Twas an ancient cuſtom among the *Heathens* (as Learned and Excellent Mr. *Hale* of *Eaton*, out of *Chryſoſtom* obſerves) that if a man offered himſelf to contend in the *Olympick-Games*, he was not permitted ſo to do, till Proclamation had been firſt made, whether any man knew him to be either a Servant, or a man of infamous Life; and if any ſuch Imputation were proved againſt him, it was ſufficient to keep him back, let his skill be what it would.

What care was here taken that their Vanities ſhould not be diſcredited! And will neither Reaſon nor Religion convince us, that not only equal, but far greater care ought to be taken to diſcou-

rage

rage prophaneness among Christians, than the blind Heathens ever took to preserve the reputation of their vain Exercises? Let all subordinate Ministers of State, and Officers in the Church, consider how great a part of this blessed Reformation is demandated to their hands.

SECT. XII.

Were Kingdoms and Commonwealths once purged from that spirit of prophaneness and debauchery, which thus defiles and overflows them, and the people generally reduced but to civility, sobriety and temperance, experience would quickly shew them the comfortable effects and happy fruits thereof.

For though this be much short of what Christianity exacts from all its professors, and insufficient to obtain the happiness of the world to come; yet it is greatly conducent to the civil happiness and flourishing of the Kingdoms of this world: and therefore richly worth the studies and endeavours of all men to promote and obtain it.

There is no Kingdom or Commonwealth in the Christian world, which would not by this means breed and send forth multitudes more than they do, with excellent abilities and qualifications fitting them to sit at the Helm of Government, and steer a more prosperous course than they do at present. A wise and steddy direction of the arduous and important affairs of Kingdoms, can only be expected from those that are able to govern themselves, and their own affairs, with sobriety and discretion.

If

If the Laws of Nations take care for the preſervation and growth of *Timber* fit for the building of Houſes and Ships, and every one ſees the uſefulneſs and neceſſity of ſuch acts; much more ought they to take care for ſuch an education of men, as may render them ſerviceable members to the State both in *Camp* and *Council.*

Magiſtrates are (in a Senſe) the foundation of Kingdoms, the ſtrong Shoulders that bear the burthen of Government; and reaſon will tell, that ſo great a weight and ſtreſs as the Affairs and Concerns of Kingdoms, ought not to be laid on their Shoulders, whoſe Legs through debauchery are too weak to bear their own reeling and ſtaggering Bodies.

Seamen and Soldiers are the Walls of Kingdoms, and under God their Prudence and Courage are the Peoples defence and ſafeguard. *Plutarch* tells us, there were two Virtues in *Hannibal* which made him proſperous and ſucceſsful. There was in him *plurimum audaciæ ad capiendo pericula, & plurimum conſilii inter ipſa pericula.* He was bold in attempting, and prudent in managing the moſt difficult Services; the former had ſignified little without the latter. Courage may throw Men into the midſt of difficulties, but Counſel and Wiſdom helps them to emerge thoſe difficulties; and I'm ſure that cannot be rationally expected from Men that daily dethrone their own Reaſon by debauchery.

But when Men not only ſober, juſt and temperate, but religiouſly good, are employed in publick Truſts and Services, we cannot but think the Security and Proſperity of ſuch a State are abundantly provided for. And our confidence hereof

is

is not only founded upon the *Maxims* of Human Reason, but of Scripture, Wisdom, and Authority also.

What a renowned, prosperous, and successful Captain of the Armies of *Israel* was good *Joshua*! No Man was able to stand before him all the days of his Life, *Josh.* 1. 5. But what bred those brave, gallant and undaunted spirits in the breast of this Heroe, and crowned his noble designs with such admirable success? If we look into *ver.* 8. we shall find, it was Religion that gave both the edge and point to his natural courage. *This Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*

Hezekiah this way became a none-such among the Kings of *Judah*; for he clave to the Lord, and the Lord was with him, and he prospered whithersoever he went forth, 2 *Kings* 18. 5, 6, 7. And dying *David* from an whole life of experiences, recommended this as the only method of prosperity unto *Solomon* his Son, *Keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, that thou mayst prosper in all that thou dost, and whithersoever thou turnest thy self*, 1 Kings 2. 3, 4.

How great a lustre therefore doth this Truth cast about it, that the restraint and reformation of Vice, and the due encouragement of Virtue and Piety, becomes the very Civil interest of Kingdoms and Nations, by the joint votes and suffrages both of Humane and Divine Wisdom? Let any Kingdom or State make tryal of this method, and from that very time they shall date their prosperity.

This

This will make them become the Terrors of their Enemies round about them; Peace and Proſperity ſhall flouriſh in the midſt of them, which is the true Level and Deſign of this moſt neceſſary and ſeaſonable attempt.

CHAP. II.

Producing one Dictate or Rule of right Reaſon reſpecting Morality, allowed by Mankind; and paſſing current through the World without one Negative Voice, except only from thoſe Men whoſe Reaſons are utterly captivated by their Luſts.

SECT. I.

SUch is the degeneracy and deep Corruption of ſome Mens Natures by ill Education, baſe Company, and long Cuſtom in Sin; that abandoning and caſting away the bonds and reſtraints of right Reaſon, as well as Religion, they give the full ſcope and Liberty to their Luſts and Paſſions, reckoning their chief happineſs to conſiſt in the Gratification and Satisfaction of their Senſitive Appetites. They affect a ſoft, delicate, ſenſe-pleaſing Life, reckoning it the only real Heaven to be deſired and ſought by them; and any other Heaven beſide that, to be meerly notional and phantaſtick. This is the Element they deſire to live

live and sport in, fitly described, *Tit.* 3. 3. by *serving divers Lusts and Pleasures.* Hence it comes to pass, that their Bodies serve only to be *strainers* for Meats and Drinks, and Channels for filthy Lusts to stream through. In this stream their Masculine Agility melts away, and all publick Hopes and Expectations from them are totally defeated and disappointed. Appetite is the *Master*, and Reason the *Slave.*

These Men (if it be fit to call them Men) have bid defiance to their own Reason, and denounced a War against their own faculties, as if Reason had licensed and priviledged (which it never did, nor can do) their worse-than bruitish Lusts, to act to the uttermost of their Abilities, without any master of restraint over them.

SECT. II.

But notwithstanding the present Captivity of Reason under usurping and domineering Lusts, so long as it hath a permanent and fixed Root and Principle in their Nature, 'tis possible it may recover its Throne and Empire over them again, as many an imprisoned King hath done, and probably would do it in a very short space, if those prejudices they have conceived against its Government, were but once fairly confuted and removed, which certainly is not hard to do.

They are of Opinion, that the Laws of Reason are too severe, strict, and rigorous. That they too much abridg them of their Pleasures and Delights, and that the Government of Sensuality being more easy, favourable and indulgent, is for that reason much more eligible and desirable.

Whereas

Whereas right Reaſon deſigns not the abandoning of all Pleaſures, but only the exchange of them, and that exchange every way to our great Advantage. The only hurt or loſs (if this muſt be accounted ſo) any Man can ſuſtain by the exchange of Pleaſures made by Reaſon and Religion, is this, that they deſign for you the rational, ordinate, and congruous Delights, both of a Man, and of a Chriſtian, in lieu of the lower, baſer, and filthy Pleaſures of a Beaſt, or a Devil.

They propoſe to you Rules about Pleaſures far more ſafe and grateful, without any culpable ſeverity or auſterity in them. Reaſon would only regulate and *legitimate* your Delights, and Religion *ſanctify* them, that you might much more purely and ſweetly enjoy them without either *ſhame* ariſing from their *turpitude*, or *fear* from their *guilt*. The Rules of both are large and indulgent enough, and keeping within their lines and limits, Men ſhall find ſuch generous, manly, and agreeable delights, as are no where to be enjoyed without them.

SECT. III.

To make this evident, I ſhall poſtulate and preſume but one thing, and that a thing ſo immediately true and ſelf-evident, that in the firſt naked propoſal of it, it naturally and eaſily lets it ſelf into every Mans underſtanding, and no ſooner asks, but gains the Approbation of right Reaſon. And that ſelf-evident Principle which I take for granted no Man of ſound intellectuals will quarrel or diſpute, is this;

That

That good which compriſeth and involveth the true Honour, Profit, and Pleaſure of the whole Man, which is more congruent to Humane Nature, and preſervative of it, is to be preferred in our Eſtimation and Choice to that which only yields a lower degree of Pleaſure, without Profit or Honour to the baſeſt part of Man; and that low and tranſient Pleaſure it doth yield, attended and followed with many preſent and future Miſeries, deſtructive to the whole Man.

The ſeveral parts of this complex Propoſition, caſt ſuch a Light and Glory round about them, that I cannot imagine, but as ſoon as it ſhall be propounded to the Judgment and Cenſure of ſound Reaſon, it muſt immediatly gain both its Approbation and Applauſe.

But becauſe Reaſon in many Men is ſo beclouded, and diſturbed by Luſts and Paſſions, that it can neither receive things orderly, nor judg of them truly and impartially: I conceive it needful to demand the Cenſure and Judgment of their Reaſon upon the Particulars compriſed in this general complex Propoſition, that ſo weighing and examining them one by one, we may try whether ſound Reaſon hath any valuable Exception againſt any Part or Member thereof.

SECT. IV.

And *Firſt*, I take it for granted, that no Man's Reaſon will deny or demur to this Propoſition, That *Good is to be choſen, and Evil to be avoided.* For the will is naturally carried to that which is good, as to its proper Object, and ſhuns that which is Evil. And that is naturally good which

is convenient, and agreeable to Nature; and that naturally Evil which is diſconvenient and hurtful to Nature. So that the choice of Good rather than Evil, is the natural choice of the Will; and this choice of the Will is founded upon the Law of Self-preſervation, without which the Creation would quickly diſband, and no particular being could be long preſerved.

And not only the Will of rational Creatures chuſeth the Good, and refuſeth the Evil; but every ſenſitive Creature is endowed with a natural Faculty to diſcern the one from the other in order to the preſervation of their beings. You find it in the ſmalleſt and moſt deſpicable *Animals*, and therefore cannot deny it unto Man, the nobleſt and moſt excellent Being on Earth, except only in his Non-age, before he hath lived to the years of Diſcretion. Children indeed in their Infancy have no knowledg to diſcern between Good and Evil, *Deut.* 1. 39. But Men not diſcerning Good from Evil, or chuſing Evil rather than Good, are many degrees beneath Babes.

Secondly, Nor will Reaſon hæſitate at all upon this Particular, That *there are degrees of Goodneſs found among Pleaſures and Delights*; ſome are better than others. Every Life is not alike pleaſant and happy. To deny this, is to make the moſt deſpicable Worm, or Fly, equally happy with the moſt excellent Creature upon Earth. And beſide, for the Conviction of ſuch debauched Perſons, as I am here arguing with, it will follow clearly from the denial of that truth, that they really gain nothing to themſelves by all their extravagant and licentious Courſes, there being altogether as much Pleaſure and Felicity in a temperate, chaſt, and ſober Life,

Life, as there is in that beastly Life they live. And their very departure from the way of Sobriety, to embrace the ways of debauchery, most clearly evinceth to the World, that they do not think all Pleasures equal, but that they do confidently expect to find more Pleasure and Satisfaction in the way that they chuse, than they did in the way of Sobriety, which they have left and abandoned.

Thirdly, I cannot be so uncharitable to think, but the Relicks of Reason in the most profligate Person, will readily admit and grant, that *wheresoever the good of Pleasure, Profit, and Honour meet together, and jointly conspire to make the life of a Man more comfortable, and more durable upon Earth, that is much rather to be chosen, than a meer transient touch of sensitive Pleasure, accompanied with present regret, and followed with the Ruin of Estate, Name, Honour, Soul, and Body.* He that thinks otherwise, is more fit for a *Bedlam*, than a rational and sober Confutation. These things therefore I take for granted, they being innate and self-evident Notions and Principles in all Men.

SECT. V.

The Wisdom and Goodness of God are clearly discernable in leaving such Principles of Reason, and common notices of Conscience in Men after the fall, as prompt them naturally unto Justice, Chastity, Temperance, and Sobriety, and do struggle within them to restrain them from, or recover them out of their Immoralities, from which many advantages do result.

For

For hereby God is acknowledged all the World over, Men every where ſhewing by theſe things the work of the Law written in their hearts, *Rom.* 2. 15.

Hereby Kingdoms and Commonwealths are preſerved, this being the common Bridle which reſtrains the outragious Luſts of millions of Men, which elſe would turn the World into Confuſion, tho here and there ſome have ſlipt Bridle, and run into all exceſs of Riot We juſtly admire the Providence of God in butting, bounding, and reſtraining the boiſterous Ocean by Mountains, Rocks and Sands; and as much is he to be admired in curbing the inſatiable Luſts of Men by theſe innate Principles of Reaſon and Conſcience.

Hereby the way to Sin is in ſome meaſure barr'd and ſhut up, and the further progreſs of Sinners, already entered into it, ſtop'd and denied For Actions done with regret, cannot be ſuppoſed to be done ſo frequently and furiouſly, as if they were done without any regret; or that the way to Sin were ſmoothed to them with a full Conſent and Approbation of their whole ſelf. For moſt Sinners find in themſelves what *Medea* did,

——— *Video meliora proboque,*
Deteriora ſequor ———

They both ſee and approve that which is better, tho they follow that which is worſe.

In a word, theſe Relicks of Reaſon and Conſcience in Men, are fit handles to catch hold on, for the turning them about from Satan unto God. When *Paul* reaſoned with *Felix* about Temperance,

Righteousness, and Judgment to come, his words laid hold upon these handles, and gave him such a shake, that the Text saith, *Felix trembled.* And oh! that this Discourse might take hold of the Reason and Conscience of every profane Reader, and produce some more excellent and lasting effect upon his Soul.

SECT. VI.

These notices and dictates of Reason and Conscience in Men being so necessary and many ways beneficial to themselves, as well as to the whole Community; it must therefore be an horrid Villany to war against them, and by violence to suppress and enslave them to our own Lust.

This is as if a Company of desperate *Ruffians* should assault Innocent and Noble Travellers upon the lawful Road, bind and gag their Guides, whilst they Rob and Prostitute them. Thus deal bruitish Lusts, headed by the Devil, with the Affections of Men, travelling along the lawful Road of Duty, under the conduct of Reason and Conscience. For this Villany it was that the Apostle tells us, The wrath of God was revealed from Heaven against the *Heathens*, who held the truth in unrighteousness, *Rom.* 1. 18. They had the Light of Natural Reason and Conscience in them, the inbred Notions of Good and Evil, which raised their hopes or fears according to the Nature and Quality of their Actions.

Conscia mens ut cuique sua est, ita concipit intra
Pectora pro facto spemque metumque suo. Ovid.

But

But their head-ſtrong boiſterous Luſts rudely and violently brake in upon Reaſon and Conſcience, impriſoned and bound them as *Zedekiah* did the faithful Prophet *Jeremiah* for the diſcharge of his Duty to him. For this the Wrath of God was revealed from Heaven againſt them. And indeed we cannot wonder it ſhould be incenſed againſt them, as it will againſt all that act like them. For into ſuch a Sin as this, many direful Aggravations fall in together to make it a monſtrous and prodigious Sin.

Here we find an high and cauſeleſs Abuſe of the nobleſt natural Faculties and Powers of a Mans own Soul. What harm have thy Reaſon and Conſcience done thee by ſtimulating and perſwading to Temperance, Chaſtity, and Sobriety, or by ſtrugling and ſtriving with thee to prevent both thy preſent and future Ruin? Do they lay their faithful and loving Hands of reſtraint upon thee, when they ſee thee running headlong into Deſtruction? And do they deſerve for this, and no worſe than this, to be thus trampled under foot and abuſed? Ask thy ſelf, Man, whether thou thinkeſt thy very Dog deſerves to be hanged for opening at midnight, and taking that thief by the throat who came to cut thine? And dareſt thou uſe thoſe noble Powers within thee, worſe than thou wouldſt uſe a Dog? Humanity would bluſh at ſuch an Action.

Theſe vile Abuſes of thy Reaſon and Conſcience carry alſo in them an horrid contempt of God, whoſe Patent, Officers, and Delegates thy Reaſon and Conſcience are. Thoſe certainly Sin with an high hand againſt the Lord, who make nothing to controul, kick, and lay in Irons his Commiſſion-Officers, appointed for no other end, by their preſent and future Felicity. Nay,

Such Men as these are found in a plain Confederacy with the Devil, and that in a most unnatural and horrid Plot against their own Souls and Bodies. Their Light and their Lusts are strugling together. Sin and Conscience are combating one with the other; the one to destroy, the other to save the Man. Darest thou joyn with thy Lusts against thy light, and think not to be brought in as a Party, and confederate with the Devil? The stopping of the Mouth of thy Conscience, fully proves both thy Consent and Concealment. And if proved Consent and Concealment make thee not a Party and Accessary, it will be very strange.

Plutarch in his Book *de Amicitiâ*, relates a Story of a *Persian*, who scuffling in the dark with a *Magician*, against whom he had a grudge, and not being able to conquer him himself, called upon his Friend, who stood by with a naked Sword ready to strike, but durst not for fear of killing his Friend. The *Persian* crys out, *Strike, strike, however thy stroke fall; thrust at an adventure; I care not so thou kill the* Magician, *tho thou kill him through my own Body.*

Much so stands the case here with a little Variation. Thou art furiously set upon the Enjoyment of thy Lusts, nothing will quiet thee but their Satisfaction. Thy Reason and Conscience will oppose it, and struggle hard with thee to withhold thee from them. But thou carest not in the rage of thine insatiable Appetite, tho thy Reason and Conscience both fall in the Combate, rather than thy Lusts should not be satisfied. Oh, what Bruits! yea, what Monsters can Sin turn Men into!

SECT.

SECT. VII.

If Men have not quite extinguiſhed both Reaſon and Conſcience by debauchery, and diveſted themſelves of Humanity, one would think no Motion or Addreſs can poſſibly be made to them more fair, rational, and inoffenſive than this, that they would be pleaſed but to conſult themſelves, and hearken to the native and unconſtrained Voice of their own Reaſon and Conſcience, before they engage themſelves in matters of great Concernment, upon which both their preſent and eternal welfare do depend; or if they are already engaged, yet at leaſt to lend an ear to what they have to offer for their recovery, before it be too late.

You are not here urged and preſſed to hearken to the Voices of your Enemies that hate you, or to the counſel and advice of meer Strangers who know not your Affairs; but to hearken to your ſelves, to be your own Arbitrators and Judges, to draw up the Award with your own hand. 'Tis a ſtrange and an hard caſe indeed, and ſcarce to be ſuppoſed, that Men ſhould fall out with themſelves at ſuch a rate, that they had rather hear the Voice of their mortal Enemy the Devil, and liſten to his Advice and Counſel, than to the Voice of their own Reaſon and Conſcience.

We all account it madneſs in *Balaam* to beat his innocent Aſs, and threaten to kill her for ſhunning the Sword of the Angel that oppoſed his paſſage in a ſinful and dangerous Expedition. But how many uſe both their Reaſon and Conſcience worſe than Aſſes, becauſe they dare not go forward, and deſperately carry them into the very

midſt of Dangers and Miſeries, which they plainly foreſee and warn them of?

What Injuries have thy Reaſon or Conſcience done thee, Man? What Affronts have they given thee? That thou wilt not ſuffer them to ſpeak or offer one word, tho never ſo pertinent, ſeaſonable, and neceſſary? There is a Civility due from us to meer Strangers, yea, to Strangers of an inferior Rank and Quality. The leaſt we can do, is to give them a patient hearing, and not interrupt them whilſt they ſpeak nothing but what is rational, pertinent, and neceſſary, eſpecially if it be to their own good and advantage. 'Tis ſtrange Men ſhould not think themſelves as much obliged to pay Civility and Reſpect to their own Reaſons and Conſciences, as they daily pay to meer Strangers and Inferiors. Give them but a patient hearing, and they will both tell thee:

We are thine appointed Guardians, and have our Commiſſion from God to adviſe, direct, and counſel thee. We are thy faithful and inward Friends; yea, we are thine own ſelf, and the beſt and nobleſt part of thy ſelf too. At our hands God will require thy Blood, ſhouldſt thou periſh by our Silence or Treachery. We cannot be both Silent and Innocent, are both in ſuch hazard. Don't abuſe us, and ſtop our Mouths for crying out, Stop, Stop, when we ſee thee departing from the Paths of Honeſty, Honour, and Safety, and taking the direct Road to that Gulph of Miſery, in which few, if any foot-ſteps are found of ſuch as return again, that are far engaged therein.

Suffer us but fairly and friendly to expoſtulate the matter with thee. What deſign can we have againſt thy true Intereſt, whilſt thine and ours cannot poſſibly be oppoſite or diſjunct, but one and the ſame Intereſt.

Well

Well then, that which thy Reaſon and Conſcience offers being ſo weighty, fair, and juſt, and what thine own Intereſt plainly lies in, I will not be ſo uncharitable, as to ſuppoſe thou wilt either refuſe to hear, or reject what they have to ſay in the following Caſes and Debates.

CHAP. III.

Wherein the true Cenſure and Judgment of right Reaſon and Conſcience, are given upon profane Swearing *and* Blaſpheming *the Name of God: As alſo their Replies to ſeveral Pleas offered in Defence or Excuſe thereof.*

SECT. I.

GOD beſtowed on Man the Noble Faculty of Speech (a peculiar Favour and Priviledg) for two Ends and Uſes. (1) That by the uſe of his Tongue he may glorify his Maker, and ſound forth the Praiſes of his Redeemer. (2) That we might thereby be able to communicate our minds one to another in all our neceſſary and convenient Intereſts and Concernments, whether Civil or Religious. This Member, the Tongue, tho ſmall in quantity, is found to be mighty in efficacy; and whilſt it is kept under the Rule and Government of Grace, the words that drop from

it are as Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver. Gracious words are Bread to feed, and Water to refreſh the Souls of others. A ſanctified Tongue is as a Tree of Life. Converſion, Edification, and Conſolation, are the delicious Fruits of the Lips.

But the Tongues of ſome Men break looſe from under all the Laws and Rules both of Reaſon and Religion, and ſerve only to vent the froth and filth which abounds in the heart, as in a Fountain of Pollution. For *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh.* The Tongue moves lightly, but falls heavily; it ſtrikes ſoft, but wounds deep. It would not ſpare Men of the higheſt Rank and Eminence, did not the fear of capital Puniſhments teach them ſo much Wit to keep their Tongues in Priſon, that they may keep their Bodies out of Priſon. And tho for this reaſon they are afraid of making too bold with the Names of Men; yet having no fear of God at all, they fall upon his great and dreadful Name, toſſing it to and fro without any Reſpect or Reverence.

Auguſtus prohibited the common uſe of his Name, leſt it ſhould grow too cheap and vile, by the common and needleſs uſing of it. The Name of *Mercurius Triſmegiſtus* was very ſparingly uſed, becauſe of the great Reverence the People had for him. The very *Heathens* were afraid to pronounce the Name of their great god, *Demogorgon*, as fearing the Earth would tremble when his Name was mentioned. How doth the Reverence of *Heathens* to their falſe gods expoſe and aggravate the impudence of profeſſed Chriſtians in their vile Indignities and Abuſes of the Great and Terrible Name

of

of the True God! Yea, they not only take up his Name vainly and raſhly into their Lips, but audaciouſly inſert it by a profane Oath into their common Talk, as that which gives the Grace, Lepor, and Ornament to their Diſcourſes. Some have not been aſhamed to ſay, What pity is it that Swearing ſhould be a Sin, which gives ſo great a Grace and Ornament to Language?

SECT. II.

Swearing by the Name of God in a righteous Cauſe, when called thereto by due Authority, is not only a lawful, but a religious Act, founded upon, and directed to the Honour of God's Omniſcience, whereunto there is a ſolemn Appeal made in every aſſertory and promiſſory Oath, and a religious Acknowledgment made him of his infallible Knowledg of the Truth or Falſhood of our Hearts, and all the Secrets of them, be they never ſo involved and inward things.

The lawful uſe and end of Swearing, is to put an end to all Strife, and to maintain both Equity and Charity among Men, the two Bonds and Ligaments of Humane Society. Now it being the Soveraign Right and Property of God alone, infallibly to ſearch and try the hearts and reins of Men, he thereby becomes the infallible Witneſs to the Truth or Falſhood of what they ſpeak; ſo that in every ſuch lawful Oath, there is not only a ſolemn Appeal, and in that Appeal an Aſcription of Glory to his Sovereign Omniſcience; but therein (implicitely at leaſt) they put themſelves under his Wrath and Curſe, in caſe they

Swear falſly, which makes this Action moſt ſacred and ſolemn.

The deep Corruption of Humane Nature by the fall, makes theſe Appeals to God under a Curſe neceſſary. For it is ſuppoſed, tho Men be falſe and deceitful, yet there is ſome Reverence of a Deity, and fear of his Wrath and Curſe, left unextinguiſhed in their fallen Nature. So that Men will rather ſpeak the truth, (tho to their own ſhame and loſs) than by invocating ſo glorious a Name in vain, put both Soul and Body under his Wrath and Curſe. By which it appears what an awful and ſolemn thing an Oath is; and that every good Man not only takes a lawful Oath with holy fear and trembling, becauſe of the Solemnity of the Action; but rather ought to chuſe Death, than to Swear prophanely, becauſe of the horrid Malignity of the Action.

SECT. III.

The contumely and malignity found in profane Oaths, appears in that terrible threatning, *The Lord will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his Name in vain*; a threatning altogether as Juſt and Righteous, as it is Severe and Terrible. This Sin admits of degrees of Guilt. 'Tis highly ſinful to Swear by the Name of God lightly and vainly in our common Diſcourſes, tho the Oath be clip'd, and half ſuppreſs'd, or diſguiſed in the Pronunciation of it, which argues ſome remains of fear and ſhame in the Sinner.

'Tis yet worſe (and indeed not a jot below Blaſphemy) to ſwear by any other Name, than the Name of God. For in ſo doing, they attribute

bute to a Creature the Sovereign and Incommunicable property of God, ſet that Creature in the very Throne of God, and Inveſt it with the Regalities of his Omniſcience, to know our Hearts, and Almighty Power to avenge the wrong upon us done to himſelf, as well as to Men by falſe ſwearing.

But to break in rudely and blaſphemouſly upon the Sacred and Tremendous Name of God, with bold and full-mouth'd Oaths, ſtriking through his Sacred Name, with direct contumelious Blaſphemies; this argues an heart from which all fear of God is utterly expelled and baniſhed.

Yet ſome there are grown up to that prodigious heighth of Impiety, that they dare aſſault the very Heavens, and diſcharge whole Vollies of Blaſphemies againſt that Glorious Majeſty which dwells there. They are not afraid to bid defiance to him, and challenge the God that made them, to do his worſt. They deck and adorn (as they account it) their common Diſcourſes with bloody Oaths, and horrid Imprecations, not reckoning them Genteel and Modiſh without them. It conſiſts not with the greatneſs of their Spirits to be wicked at the common rate. They are willing to let the World know, that they are none of thoſe puny, ſilly Fellows, that are afraid of inviſible Powers, or ſo much Cowards as to clip a full-mouth'd Oath, by ſuppreſſing, or whiſpering the Emphatical ſounding Syllable; but think an horrid Blaſphemy makes the moſt ſweet and graceful Cadency in their Helliſh *Rhetorick*.

They

They glory that they have fully conquered all those troublesome Notions of Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice, Heaven and Hell, to that degree, that they can now Affront the Divine Majesty to his very Face, and not fear the worst he threatens in his Word against their wickedness.

If there be a God (which they scarce believe) they are resolved audaciously to provoke him to give them a convincing Evidence of his Being. And if he be (as they are told he is) rich in Patience and Forbearance, they are resolved to try how far his Patience will extend, and what load of wickedness it is capable to bear.

If their Damnation be not yet sure enough, they will do their utmost to make it sure, by breaking down the only Bridg whereby they can escape Damnation; I mean, by trampling under their feet the precious Blood and Wounds of the Son of God, and imprecating the Damnation of Hell upon their own Souls, as if it slumbred too long, and were too slow-pac'd in its motions towards them. I am of Opinion, there are few Christians to be found on Earth, crying so often, *Lord, pardon, Lord, save me*, as some Wretches among us cry, (*Horresco referens!*) *God damn me, the Devil take me.*

Herein they seem to envy the happiness of the Devils, and damned Wretches in Hell, and endeavour (as one speaks) to snatch Damnation out of Gods hands before the time, as if they could not be soon enough among their roaring and howling Companions in the midst of the everlasting burnings. But, why such haste to be perfectly miserable? The very Devils themselves deprecate Torments before their time, tho you imprecate

imprecate them. Your miſery makes haſte enough towards you; you need not quicken it, or thus run to meet it.

I am perſwaded, that if the Bars of the Bottomleſs Pit were broken up, and Devils ſhould aſcend in Humane Shapes, none among them would be found haſtning upon themſelves the fulneſs and compleatneſs of their Miſery as you do. 'Tis a Truth, though a ſtrange one, That it is much eaſier to find, than imagine men upon Earth profeſſing *Chriſtian Religion*, yet in ſome reſpect ſunk below the wickedneſs of the *Diabolical* nature, by making Damnation both the Subject of their Drollery, and the object of their very wiſhes and deſires. Some greater Maſters of our Language, may more lively and emphatically expreſs the horrid nature of this Sin; but excuſe me, Reader, if I believe no Words or Thoughts can meaſure the heighth or depth of this monſtrous Abomination.

SECT. IV.

Such contumelious Language as this (eſpecially when grown modiſh and common) cannot but be a moſt high and dreadful provocation of God, and ſuch an one as will certainly bring down his deſolating vengeance, not only upon the heads of blaſphemers themſelves, but upon the States and Kingdoms that connive at, or tolerate them. We read *Zech.* 5. 2, 3, 4. of a flying Roll-full of Curſes, the length thereof twenty Cubits, and the breadth thereof ten Cubits, which ſhall enter into the houſe of the Swearer, remain in the midſt of his Houſe, and conſume it with the Timber and Stones

Stones thereof. Blaſphemy and prophane ſwearing are like Barrels of Gunpowder laid under the Foundation of many great and noble Families, many of which are already blown up, and laid in ruins by this Sin, and many more ready to follow, as ſoon as the Juſtice of God ſhall give fire to it.

And (comparatively ſpeaking) it were happy if the miſchief ended here; but alas! it cauſes God to commence a quarrel with the whole Land, *Hoſ.* 4. 2,3. *And becauſe of Oaths the Land mourneth.* You find in *Iſa.* 38. what it was that brought that unparallell'd deſolation upon that famous and flouriſhing City *Jeruſalem*, and the whole Land of *Judah*: *For Jeruſalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen, becauſe their tongues and their doings are againſt the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory.*

But alas! Scripture-threatnings ſignifie ſcarce ſo much with theſe men, as the Predictions of the Weather in an *Almanack*; and which is ſtrange to conſider, the very execution of Scripture-threatnings before their eyes, will not terrifie them from this inhumane wickedneſs: Even theſe alſo are laughed to ſcorn, or eaſily forgotten.

Oh! that God would ſet it home with power upon the Spirits of all that are in Power, to take ſome ſpeedy and effectual courſe to remove this accurſed thing, this iniquity to be puniſhed by the *Judge*; one (and a chief one too) of thoſe direful provocations of Heaven, to which we owe a ſpecial part of our National infelicity at this day. We all acknowledge, that all proſperity and ſucceſs depends upon God: If ſo, Reaſon will ſubſume, that it muſt be therefore the intereſt of Kingdoms

and

and Commonwealths to prevent and reſtrain thoſe impieties, which ſo audaciouſly provoke and incenſe his wrath. As much is this their duty and intereſt, as it is the intereſt of a *Courtier* to avoid offences of his Royal Maſter, the King, upon whoſe Favour, his Honour and Preferment depends. Or as it is the duty of the *Owner*, to keep in that Ox which is uſed to goring; or cover that pit into which ſome have, and others of his Family are like to fall; Or carefully and ſpeedily to remove that Gunpowder which his enemies have placed under the foundation of his houſe to blow it up. Both Reaſon and Experience will inform the Rulers of this World, That profeſſed Rebels to the God of Heaven, are never like to make uſeful Subjects in the Kingdoms of men.

SECT. V.

Till publick Juſtice lay hold upon ſuch Offenders, let us try what cloſe reaſoning may effect for their Reformation. 'Tis hard to imagine, that men of Senſe ſhould ſo generally and ſo far engage themſelves in this Courſe of prophane ſwearing, and have nothing at all to ſay for themſelves. If they have no reaſon at all to offer in juſtification, or excuſe of what they do, they act the bruits, not the men, and are ſelf-condemned already.

'Tis a queſtion with me, whether the Soul of man on this ſide Hell can ſink ſo far into the nature of a Devil, as to ſin becauſe he will ſin, or to engage himſelf in a Courſe of Sin, without any reſpect at all to ſome carnal intereſt, either of Profit, Pleaſure or Honour.

The

The *Thief* hath a viſible Temptation of Gain to allure him, or pinching Neceſſity to induce him. The *Lyar* is drawn in to commit that ſecond Sin, to cover the ſhame and turpitude of a former. The *Adulterer* promiſeth himſelf Pleaſure in the ſatisfaction of his Luſts. And though men generally ſtand amazed to think what that Temptation ſhould be which prevails upon the Swearer, yet doubtleſs ſomething there is he hath to plead in excuſe and extenuation of his Fault. Whatſoever it be, let it be produced and weighed in the ballance of right Reaſon; *valeat quantum valere poteſt*, let it have its due value and conſideration. And could I imagine any thing more likely to be their inducements, than what I ſhall here mention, I would not conceal them. There are only four things that can fall within the compaſs of my imagination pleadable by them, when ſeriouſly charged with the evil of the Fact.

1. Some of them will haply tell us, that they would not ſwear as they do, if they could gain credit to what they ſay without it; but the incredulity of others provokes them to add ſo many Oaths to their ſingle Affirmations.

2. Others of them will tell us, they only ſwear in their paſſion, when provoked by injuries received from others; and if men did not wrong them, they would not wrong God as they do.

3. Some will plead, that Swearing is become modiſh, the Badge and Character of a Gentleman, that it gives them reputation among men of their own rank and quality, and that they ſhall be looked upon as ſneaking fools, unfit for the Company of Gentlemen, if they could not diſcourſe with them in this Dialect.

4. And

4. And ſome will confeſs the Practice is evil, but that they have gotten ſuch an ill habit, and the Sin is become ſo cuſtomary with them, that many times they know not whether they ſwear or no.

I cannot imagine, nor (I think) they themſelves, what elſe is pleadable in excuſe or extenuation of this horrid Sin: Let theſe that are produced have a fair tryal at the bar of Reaſon, and carry your ſelves towards this Sin for ever hereafter, according to that righteous verdict your ſelves ſhall now be forced to paſs upon it.

SECT. VI.

To begin with the firſt Plea; You ſay, you would not ſwear as you do, could you gain credit to your words without it. Weigh this queſtion in the upright balance of thine own Reaſon, whether any wiſe or ſober man in the world, will find himſelf ever the more obliged to believe what you ſay, by the addition of blaſphemous Oaths and Imprecations, to your plain and ſimple Affirmations and Negations. I cannot think that you your ſelves would give the more credit to any man that ſhall profeſs his ſincerity to you, by finding him in that his very Profeſſion falſe and treacherous to his God. Say, Reaſon, doſt not thou take this for a ſure truth, That he who makes no conſcience of being true to God, will never make much conſcience of being falſe to men? For what is that which gives any man's words reputation among wiſe and ſober men, but the ſuppoſition of his integrity and conſcientious fear of his deceit and

and guile? Take away that, and with it you take away the credibility of all his Reports and Affirmations.

If I look upon the perſon that ſpeaks, as a man of integrity and conſcienſcious tenderneſs, I have a ſufficient ordinary ſecurity of the truth of what he ſaith. But if I look upon him as a man of a proſtitute and ſeared Conſcience, that dares venture upon any ſin; a man in whom there is no awe of God to produce veracity in his words; then my Reaſon preſently concludes, that where there is no *Truth*, there ought to be no *Truſt*: For *Truth* is the very ground-work and foundation of *Truſt*. Now what truth can we ſuppoſe to be left in that man, that ſticks not upon any trivial occaſion to break aſunder all the obligations of a Creature to his Creator; together with all the bonds of kindneſs his great and beſt Benefactor hath bound him withall, and without any the leaſt Injury he can pretend his God hath done him, to fly in his very face with the moſt contumelious Language? Can we ſuppoſe any truth to be in, or any truſt to be due to ſuch a man as this?

Good men and bad are thus contradiſtinguiſhed, *Eccl.* 9. 2. *Him that ſweareth, and he that feareth an oath.* A conſcientious man is ſo afraid of an Oath, that he would rather chuſe to die than ſwear ſome kind of Oaths: And though he be ſatisfied of the lawfulneſs of an Oath in general, and of the matter of that Oath he ſweareth in particular; yet an holy awe and fear of God fills his heart, when he ſwears lawfully and neceſſarily, leſt he ſhould fail in the manner of it, by not giving that due reverence to the Name of God, which

which ſo ſacred and ſolemn an Action requires.

But from prophane ſwearing and blaſpheming the Name of God, every mans Reaſon may juſtly and plainly infer this Concluſion; That the fear of God is not in that man's heart: And where there is no fear of God, what truth can be ſuppoſed in him, or what truſt can be due to his Words or Oaths? but the more he ſwears, ſtill the leſs reaſon all wiſe men have to believe him. And I am ſure the credulity of Fools adds little reputation to him. This Plea therefore for prophane Swearing, is altogether ſham'd, baffled and caſhiered by the common Reaſon of Mankind.

SECT. VII.

Call therefore to the Bar of Reaſon, the ſecond Plea or Apology for prophane Swearing.

You ſay, you ſwear not, unleſs provoked by injuries men have done you.

This is ſo weak a Plea for ſo great a Sin, that I wonder men are not aſhamed to bring it into the Court of Reaſon. This is the true ſenſe and ſtrength of it. My enemy hath abuſed me, therefore I'll avenge the wrong my enemy hath done me, upon my beſt Friend and Benefactor. I challenge you to give but the colour or the ſhadow of a ſound Reaſon, why upon any abuſe you have received from men, you ſhould fall ſo injuriouſly upon the Name of God, who never abuſed or injured you, ſince he gave you a Being, but hath always done you good. Tell me, Man, (if thou have

have the Reason of a man in thee) what wrong hath God done thee? Wherein hath he injured thee, that thou thus wreakest thy revenge upon him? If an enemy have affronted you, Reason would tell you, you ought not to take revenge for it, upon your Friend and best Benefactor. Have you none but God to abuse, when men abuse and injure you? Can your Reason comprobate and allow such an Action as this? Satan instigates the corruptions of men to injure you, and you fly in the face of God for it, whose Laws severely prohibit such Actions, and will avenge the injuries done unto him. Speak no more therefore for ever in the way of excusing the horrid sinfulness of this fact against God, upon the account of injuries done thee by thy Fellow-Creature. The Case is plainly determined, and cast over the bar of Reason with contempt and abhorrence.

SECT. VIII.

Come we next to your third Excuse or Plea; That *Swearing is become modish, and gives you a Reputation among men of your own Rank and Quality, and that you shall be looked upon as sneaking fellows, unfit for the Society of Gentlemen, if you did not discourse with them in their own Dialect.*

This Apology for Sin is of no late date: *Salvian* mentions it as far back as his own Time; prophane persons then * thus pleaded for themselves, That they were compelled to be evil, lest they should be accounted vile.

* *Mali esse coguntur, ne viles habeantur.*

Whether

Whether there be any weight in this Apology for Swearing, will quickly appear, now it is to be laid in the ballance of true Reaſon.

1. And firſt of all, let us conſider what makes a true Gentleman, and whether prophane Swearing have any place in his true Character and Deſcription. A Gentleman is one that ſprings from famous and renowned Anceſtors, and degenerates not from their Probity and Honour. †

† *Generoſus, nobilis, ex præclaro genere ortus, qui a genere non deficit.*

This is the man whom the *Latins* call *Generoſus*, and we a *Gentleman*. Becauſe we ſuppoſe a man of ſuch an Extraction and Education more *Gentle*, affable, and condeſcending to Inferiors, and to keep a ſtricter government over his Tongue and Paſſions, than rude Plebeans are wont to do. Upon this account the Poet rightly obſerves;

Quo major eſt quiſquis, magis eſt placabilis ira,
Et Faciles motus mens generoſa capit.

Men of *Genteel* Extraction and Education, are Perſons whoſe Paſſions are ſuppoſed to move more *gently* than other mens: And if at any time they be moved diſorderly, yet are they more placable, and ſooner reduced, than thoſe of ſordid and baſer Spirits are.

'Tis Vertue which raiſes and ennobles Families at firſt: for *omnis ſanguis concolor*, all Humane Blood is derived from, and equally tainted by *Adam*. Nobler and Baſer Blood is an after Difference, made by Virtue and Vice among men. And as Virtue firſt ennobled and raiſed ſome Families

milies above others, ſo it will ſtill continue the Line of Honour in their Poſterity: And as their Virtues ſhall encreaſe, ſo will their Honour proportionably do.

The Caſe truly and plainly ſtanding thus, 'tis morally impoſſible to make Debauchery the proper Badge and Character of Gentility. For men of Eminency above the Vulgar, are more obliged than they to ſhun all baſe and ſordid Actions: And as their Honour increaſeth, ſo do their obligations to Temperance and Sobriety encreaſe and ſtrengthen upon them proportionably.

'Twas therefore a right and rational Obſervation of *Hieronæ*, *I ſee nothing deſirable in Nobility* (ſaith he) *but this, that ſuch men are bound by a certain kind of neceſſity, not to degenerate from, or ſtain the glory and honour of their renowned Anceſtors.* And the Reaſon is ſtrong and evident. For Vertue being that which firſt differenced their Blood from others, they are obliged by all the value they have for the honour of their Blood and Families, to ſhun thoſe Vices which ſtain that honour and dignity. And what Vice can diſhonour and debaſe them more, than prophane Swearing? For if the *Arms* of many Noble Families have been reverſed for Treaſon againſt the King; 'tis irrational to imagine, that Treaſon againſt the King of Kings, ſhould add a new mark of honour: And what is Blaſphemy but Treaſon againſt God? 'Tis plain then from the true Riſe and Character of a Gentleman, prophane Swearing neither firſt raiſed, nor can preſerve and continue, but rather blots and expoſes their Reputation and Honour.

2. Though

2. Though I am moſt willing to pay a becoming deference to all Perſons of Noble and Genteel Extraction, yet in faithfulneſs to their true honour, I am here obliged to ſay, (and in ſaying it, I can offend no man that hath a true ſenſe of honour) that their natural Deſcent can never give them ſo much honour, as the Vices I am here cenſuring will reflect ignominy and diſhonour upon them. To be a ſlave of Satan, and your own luſts, is ſuch a mark of infamy, as all the honourable and illuſtrious Titles in the world can never cover. It is better to riſe by Vertue to Honour, from contemptible Parents, than by Vice and prophaneneſs to grow contemptible from honourable Parents. 'Tis your honour to have many Servants at your command, obſequiouſly attending a nod of your head, or a beck of your finger: but ask your own Reaſon, Gentlemen, whether it be not a greater diſhonour for you to attend as obſequiouſly your ſelves upon every beck and nod of Satan, and your own luſts.

Were your *Natural Birth* once ennobled by the *New-Birth*, you would be more than thrice honourable: Grace would make you more illuſtrious, than your natural Extraction doth or can do. Or if Morality (which is far inferior to that honour, and for which, *Heathens* themſelves have been renowned in the *Pagan* world) did but adorn and beautifie your Converſations, though it cannot entitle you to Heaven, or ſecure to you the glory of the world to come, yet it would make you ſhine in the eyes of men in this World, and taking its advantage from your honourable Extraction, make you differ from perſons of an inferior rank, as Stars of a greater magnitude and luſtre

I hope

I hope, Gentlemen valuing themselves upon their honour, will not be offended at a sharper invective than this, against those Vices that darken and eclipse their honour, both in the eyes of God, as well as in the judgment of all wise and good men.

3. Suppose what you say to be true, that some prophane Gentlemen should scoff and deride you for your sober Carriage, and decorous Language, (things which ought to be inseparable from true Gentility) I would in this case appeal to your own Reason, why you should not enjoy your own pleasure in as full latitude and liberty, as they do theirs? They delight in the Dialect of Devils, you in pure and inoffensive Language. If they will drink the pudled Waters, and you refuse them for the pure Cristal Streams, you have to be sure as much reason (and a thousand times more) to assert your liberty to be vertuous, than they have (or can pretend to have) a priviledge to be vicious.

And if they will be offended with you for this, their offence is groundless in themselves, and will be greatly advantagious to you. For you need not doubt but you may find better Company than theirs any where on this side Hell. I remember that rational and excellent Apology, which *Tertullian* made for the Christians in his time against the *Gentiles*: "Wherein (saith he) do we offend you, "if we will not partake with you in your De-"lights? If we sustain any damage by such our "refusal, the injury can be only our own. We "reject your Pleasures, and you are not delighted "with ours.

You

You will ſhew your ſelves true and worthy Gentlemen in abandoning and rejecting (upon ſo noble an account as this) all further unneceſſary Society with ſuch *Gentel-men*; for ſo they deſerve to be called, rather than *Gentlemen*. They boaſt indeed the honour of their Blood, whilſt they trample the precious and invaluable Blood of Chriſt under their feet: They boaſt their Eminency above the Vulgar, whilſt mean time they labour vilely to debaſe him that ſet them there.

I am ſure there's not a Devil in Hell, but is by nature of a more honourable and illuſtrious Houſe, than the proudeſt of Blaſphemers. They are Angels by Nature, though Devils by Practice. They have little reaſon to boaſt of their Original Excellency, which now aggravates their miſery: Sin darkened their luſtre, degraded them from their Natural Dignity; and ſo it will do theirs alſo, that imitate Devils in their Blaſphemy and Malignity againſt God.

4. It may as eaſily be proved as aſſerted, That to make Curſing, Swearing and Blaſpheming, the Badges and Characteriſtical marks of a true Gentleman, is the fouleſt blot and mark of infamy, which the malice of their Enemies can deviſe to put into their *Eſcutcheons*; and ſuch an affront, as ought to be highly reſented by all true *Gentlemen*.

Should the moſt malicious Enemy you have in the world, ſee an *Herald* to deviſe a mark of Infamy for your *Coats of Arms*, to make you ridiculous and a by-word among the people, he could never diſhonour you at that rate you this way diſhonour your ſelves.

For if Debauchery beboth asserted and allowed to be the true Badge of *Gentility*, then your own Reason will infer, that all the Ancient *Epithets* of *Gentility* ought thereupon to be altered. And would those *Gentlemen*, think you, take it well, to have the *Titles* and *Epithets* of *Ingenuous*, *Worthy*, *Honourable*, and *Noble*, changed into *Cursing*, *Swearing*, *Damning*, *Blaspheming Gentlemen*? You cannot but see the inconsistency of both; If therefore you will adopt and wear the latter, you must either cashier and renounce the former, or try to make the former consistent with the latter. which I'm sure the most ingenious among you will find an hard task to do.

5. I humbly beg leave to propound one plain blunt Question to you, Gentlemen. The matter of it is too rational to be rejected, and let that make atonement for the blunt manner of its proposal. And the Question is this.

Qu. *Whether your Reason and Conscience be fully satisfied, that when you die (as you know you shortly must) you shall then appear before the Judgment-seat of God, in the quality and character of Gentlemen? Do you verily think you shall find the more favour there, for the sake of your Noble Descent, and Honourable Extraction, or that your Gentility shall make an atonement for all your impiety?*

I am perswaded, *Gentlemen*, you do not, you cannot think so. You know you must appear before that God, with whom there is no respect of persons; a God that will certainly damn the impenitent Blasphemer. The man must assuredly

redly go to Hell, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. and if the *man* be damned, certainly the *Gentleman* is in a bad Caſe.

6. In a word, I am paſt all doubt, and ſo may you too, that this genteel mode of Swearing, Drinking and Whoreing, which hath ſpread ſo far in the preſent infamous Age, into Proteſtant States and Kingdoms, is the very Spirit and ſtrength of a *Popiſh* Plot, Subtilly projected, and induſtriouſly managed for their effectual reduction to *Popery*.

For nothing in the world can reconcile men to *Popery*, yea, and even endear them to it, like Debauchery. Under *Popery*, *Gentlemen* may come up to the rates of coſtly Pardons and Indulgences, for their greateſt Sins. They may give themſelves liberty to wallow in prophaneneſs all the days of their life. They may give their luſts the utmoſt ſcope and liberty, and yet have a plenary Pardon when they die. So that they need not abridge themſelves of any ſinful liberty, or boggle at the loudeſt Blaſphemy, whilſt they have that in their Pocket to ſtill and quiet ſomething that grumbles in their Boſom. Do you not ſee, *Gentlemen*, the natural tendencies of theſe things? Does not Debauchery look like a Shooing-Horn to *Popery*.

Beſides, Gentlemen, the Devil and the Pope are confederates in a farther deſign upon you; and if their deſign hit, they hope to win by Power what they may miſs by Policy; and that by the very ſame method of corrupting and debauching Perſons of eminent Rank and Quality, in Proteſtant Kingdoms and Commonwealths. For (as a

* *Laurem. Humphredus* de Nobilitate. *p.* 64.

* Learned man in Queen *Elizabeths* Days rightly observed); These are the men especially interested in the publick Affairs of Kingdoms. These represent the People in Parliaments. These make their Laws, administer the Government in Peace and War. To their hands are committed the great concerns of Nations. These are they that fill the Seats of publick Judicature.

Qui publicis rebus interfunt & præsunt, nisi viri summi ac nobiles? Quis in Senatu præit, in foro præsidet? principes sunè viri & nobiles. Quis jubet, vetat, agit, fungit? Quis versat & vobvit omnia? Quis leges fingit & refingit? Quis in pace Reipublicæ, contra hostes bella administrat, præterquam viri nobiles? &c.

If Gentlemen therefore by this means be generally corrupted and infected by Debauchery, their influence and example is likely to infect the greatest part of the Body-Politick, and either make the people easily pliable to the charms and courtships of *Popery*, for the Reason before mentioned, or so besot their excellent Parts, and enervate their Masculine Courage, that they shall fall an easie prey to their (otherwise) weak and despicable Enemies.

And certainly, Gentlemen, we have all cause to reckon this Plot very far advanced, when we shall see Debauchery every where made the Badge of Gentility; and Chastity, Temperance and Sobriety, become the marks and notes of Infamy. When Civility it self shall be hiss'd with derision out of some Gentlemens Company; and the more temperate and sober any man is, by so much the less fit to be a Gentleman's Companion.

By

By this time I hope you are convinced, that true Gentility is no enemy to Sobriety, nor Debauchery the Character of Gentility; and will at leaſt pardon, if not thank me, for endeavouring this way to ſecure the true honour of ſome, whilſt I rationally argue down the Vices and Follies of others. This Plea for Debauchery, you ſee hath the ſame fare the former had, and deſerves never to be mentioned more.

SECT. IX.

There is but one Plea more, and that as ſilly and irrational as any of the former; And that is,

The cuſtom and habit of Swearing, which you ſay is hard to be broken. This Sin is become ſo cuſtomary to you, that now you ſcarce note or obſerve it in your ſelves.

That there may be Truth in the Matter of this Plea, I neither deny nor doubt; but that it is a rational and allowable Plea, will never be granted by your own Reaſon. The thing you ſay may be true; for we ſometimes find that when you are taxed for Swearing, you will preſently ſwear that you did not ſwear; and curſe him to his face, that accuſes you for Curſing.

But pray, Gentlemen, make your own Reaſon judge, whether Cuſtom be a valid and allowed Plea for prophane Swearing and Curſing. Say, Reaſon, wilt thou allow that one of the higheſt aggravations of Sin, is pleadable in thy Court

for the excuse or extenuation of it? Wilt thou give it under thy hand, that the man is the less guilty, because the more wicked? Darest thou to warrant it, that God will take the less notice of the wrongs men do him, because they are used and accustomed so to wrong and abuse him every hour in the day? If your Reason can allow and warrant this, I must say it is different, yea, and opposite to the common Reason of Mankind.

Say not, I make my own Reason the Rule and Standard of yours or other mens. For I argue here (as I have done all along before) upon the common *Topicks* and *Maxims* of Reason, generally allowed all the World over by Mankind. If a Practice be evil, the oftner it is repeated, the more still it is aggravated.

To be plain and faithful with you, Gentlemen, if it be your custom to blaspheme, 'tis God's custom to damn Blasphemers. If you use to be drunk and unclean, God uses to punish Drunkards and Adulterers (if impenitent and unreformed) with his everlasting wrath

And when you are cited (as shortly you must be) before the awful Tribunal of the great, the just, and the terrible God, ask but your selves, whether such a Plea as this, be like to excuse you in whole or in part, and take off the heinousness of these horrid Impieties? Will your prophane Oaths, and direful Execrations and Imprecations, be excused in the least degree, by telling him, Lord, I was so accustomed to blaspheme thy Name, Cursing, Swearing and Damning were so familiar Language in my Lips from day to day, that I had quite lost the sense of the Action, as well as of the

the evil thereof; and therefore, Lord, pity, ſpare and have mercy on me: O damn not my ſoul to thine everlaſting wrath. For though I have imprecated it upon my ſelf, yet frequent cuſtom at length extinguiſhed all my ſenſe and conſcience of the evil thereof, till at length I could play with a direful imprecation as an harmleſs thing; nay, thought it an ornament and grace to my Speech, a gallant Expreſſion alamode the Times and Places I lived in.

Is not this as good a Plea, and not a jot better than that of a Malefactor upon his Tryal for Life and Death, when Theft or Robbery have been evidently and ſubſtantially proved upon him, and the Judge demandeth what he hath to ſay for himſelf, why Sentence of Death ſhould not paſs upon him? Mercy, my Lord, Mercy, cries he; for I have been ſo uſed and accuſtomed to filching and thieving from my Youth up, that for ſome years before I was apprehended, every ones Goods and Cattel ſeemed to me to look like my own; ſo that I ſcarce knew when I ſtole, and when I did not.

And thus, Gentlemen, you have heard a fair Tryal of the Sin of prophane Swearing and Imprecations of Damnation, and you have heard the verdict of your own Reaſon and Conſcience upon the Caſe. The Lord help you to break off and reform that ſin, for which there is not one word of Apology or excuſe now left in your Mouths.

Let me cloſe all I have to ſay upon this head with one plain Queſtion: Do you think you muſt die, or live here for ever, as you now do? If you are convinced (as all the Living are ſuppoſed to

be) that you must die, do you desire an easie and comfortable, or a painful and terrible Death? I presume there is no man living that is convinced he must die, but desires naturally and rationally an *εὐθανασίαν*, as easy and comfortable a dissolution as may be. If so, I appeal to your Reason, whether prophane swearing and blaspheming the Name of God, be a proper rational way to obtain peace and comfort at death? With what hope or encouragement can those tongues of yours cry at death, Lord have mercy upon me, which have prophaned that Name, and imprecated Damnation from him, till you came into your last extremities, which convinced you, you could live no longer.

'Tis a serious Question, and well worth a cool and solemn debate in your own Reasons and Consciences. Some of you are more immediately exposed to the dangers of death than others, ready to be disbanded by a *Bullet*. If you fall, you must either fall considerately, or inconsiderately. If inconsiderately, and without any sense or conscience of this horrid guilt, you die impenitently, and consequently desperately and miserably. If considerately, and with awakened Consciences, I demand, Whether such guilt as this will not roar louder than the Peals and Vollies of those great and small Guns do, which breathe Destruction upon you, and round about you? I have done my Message plainly and faithfully to the very face of your Reason and Conscience; and if for my faithfulness and zeal both for God's honour and yours, I am rewarded with your Curses; yet if you would forbear to blaspheme and rend in pieces the Name of God, I shall not much regard the obloquy

obloquy and reproach my Name ſhall undergo and ſuffer upon that account. But I expect from you better fruit than this.

CHAP. IV.

Wherein Reaſon and Conſcience are again conſulted about the Practice of Drunkenneſs; and their righteous and impartial Cenſure given upon that Caſe.

SECT. I

THough our Souls and Bodies be of vaſtly different Natures and Originals, yet they do claſp and embrace each other with moſt dear and tender affection. 'Tis marvellous to behold ſuch a Spiritual and Heavenly Creature as the Soul in all men, fervently loving, and in moſt men fondly doting upon a lump of Clay, a clod of Earth: It ſympathizeth tenderly with it. If the meaneſt Member of the Body be in pain, the Soul is preſently concerned for it, and evidences it ſelf to be ſo, by commanding the eyes both to watch and weep; the Tongue to complain and moan; the Hands to bind up its Wounds with all imaginable tenderneſs, and carefully defend it from the leaſt injurious touch: But if the whole be in danger, how do its nobler Faculties of Underſtanding, Memory and Invention, awaken and

bestir themselves to the uttermost for its deliverance and safety.

Whilst the Soul lives in union with the Body, 'tis filled with assiduous (and too often with exorbitant and distracting) cares for its necessary support and comfort. And when it must be separated from it by death, what strong aversations to death doth it ordinarily discover? The strong tyes and bonds betwixt it and the Body, cannot be loosed without much conflict and struggling, evidenced by these Emphatical groans it sends forth; groans which other men understand not, nor can be supposed to understand, till they themselves come to feel the parting-*Pull.*

The reason of all which, lies in the intimate relation which is betwixt these different Natures, which God hath married together in the Womb, from which time they have been companions and partners in all the comforts and troubles of life. The Body is the Soul's house in which it dwells, and still shall dwell, till death dissolve it. 'Tis the Soul's Garment, that clothes and covers it. It hath worn this Garment of Flesh from the beginning, and is to wear it still, till Sickness hath brought it to Rags, and Death stript it from the Soul.

'Tis the Tool and Instrument by which it doth all its Works, whilst it is in this state of composition; and therefore the Soul cannot but love it fervently. No man ever yet hated his own Flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it.

SECT.

SECT. II.

The caſe ſo ſtanding betwixt the Soul and Body, the wiſdom or folly of the Soul is plainly diſcovered in its way and manner of governing the Body, as the love and prudence of an Husband is in the government of his Wife; Or the Maſter in ordering the Affairs of his Houſe; or the neat breeding of a Man in the comely wearing of his Garments; Or the skill and care of an Artificer in the brightneſs, keenneſs, and ſharpneſs of his Tools.

Some Husbands give evidence to the world of their governing-prudence and ability, in ſuch an allowance of liberty to their Wives, as the Laws of Conjugal Love require, and their Eſtates and Incomes will conveniently bear, and no more; and in reſtraining their Extravagances, as well as by encouraging their vertuous Courſes, in keeping back no due encouragement to Vertue, nor giving the leaſt encouragement unto Vice.

A well-bred man, that carries with him a becoming-ſenſe of his Quality, and the *Decorum* he ought accordingly to obſerve, will wear his Garments decently, and becoming his Rank: They ſhall be ſure to be neat and clean, and ſit fit and comely upon his Body. He abhors to wear a Garment rumbled in the Mire, and go like a Beaſt, without regard to his Reputation.

No prudent Owner and Governour of an Houſe, will let the Rain drop through the Roof, nor choak up the Paſſage to his Door with a naſty

sty Dung-hill. His House within shall be neat, and not nasty: The Rooms clean and comely: And yet abhors to suffer superfluous Ornaments, and costly Vanities to swallow up his Estate that should maintain it, and bring Bailiffs (more odious than a Dunghill) to his very Doors.

The curious Artificer neither grinds away the substance of his Instruments to make them bright and glittering, and set an Edge too fine to hold one minutes use; nor yet suffers them to be thrown aside in some neglected corner, where Rust and Flaws shall render them utterly useless, or make him blush at the botches such Instruments will cause in his Work.

The prudent *Husbandman* will neither break the heart of his Ground for want of rest and compost, nor yet over-load it with dressing, which brings forth nothing but rank and useless Weeds; He will in a fit season turn in a stream of Water to his Meadows, like a Cordial-draught to fainting spirits; but will not drown it, and rot the very roots of his Grass, by letting in too much, or by suffering it to lie under Water too long. He will feed his Horse high enough to perform his Journey, and carry him through the Mire; but will not feed him to such an heighth, that the Rider shall neither be able to sit, nor command him.

In all these cases, the common prudence of every man, directs him to that just mediocrity, wherein both his Honour and Profit do apparently lie. And what we say in such common cases and concerns as these, is as true, and much more excellent in the Soul's prudent government of its own Body, unto which it was espoused in the

the Womb, and is its dear and conſtant Partner, both in preſent and future Good or Evil. 'Tis the Garment it wears, the Inſtrument it uſeth, and the Field it cultivates. It muſt neither deny the Body thoſe neceſſary Supports and Comforts which God and Nature allow it, nor yet ſurfeit and overcharge it with more than it is able to bear. In either of theſe Extreams, the extream folly of the Soul is diſcovered.

SECT. III.

Now the dethroning of Reaſon, and frequent Oppreſſions of Nature by the practice of *Drunkenneſs*, is the higheſt Exaltation of Folly in the Soul of Man; plainly manifeſting its ignorance and inability to order and govern the Body, to which it is married by a vital Union.

Here's a fooliſh Soul by miſgovernment, diſhonouring, and deſtroying its vigorous and comely Body, under a pretence of Love and Kindneſs to it. We account it one of the greateſt outward Infelicities in this World, incident to a diſcreet and virtuous Woman, to be headed and governed by a ſottiſh Fool, neither able to govern himſelf, or her, nor give a reaſon of his own Actions or Commands. A Man whoſe folly ſhall make her bluſh in all ſober Companies he comes into, and forces her upon ſuch a Courſe of Life, as ſhe perfectly abhors, and will bring ſpeedy Ruin upon her; all Men pity ſuch a Caſe as this. And this is the very Caſe of many a comely, vigorous Body.

Only ſuch a Woman hath two reliefs under her Bondage, which the Body of a Drunkard wants.

wants. She can sometimes withdraw and retire from his Company, and enjoy the relief of her Solitude, which the wretched Body of a Drunkard cannot do till Death, but is tied day and night to the Company of its fooliſh Soul, which is frequently abuſing it, and impoſing upon it.

Beſides, ſuch a Woman may haply over-live her vicious, abuſive Husband, and ſpend many a comfortable year in the World with a more diſcreet, ſober, and religious Partner of her Life, whoſe Sobriety, Diſcretion, Piety, and Love ſhall make full Compenſation for all thoſe years of Miſery and Slavery ſhe endured before. But the Caſe before us, admits no ſuch Relief: For as long as ever the Body lives and breathes, the Soul is, and muſt be with it, and in it. And tho Death will for a time ſeparate and divorce them, yet the Bodies ſecond Marriage at the Reſurrection can be with no other but the ſame Soul which oppreſſed and ruined it in this World. And this ſecond Marriage will be far worſe than the firſt. For tho it were the ſottiſh Souls ſlave and drudge in this World, and ſuffered many a ſickneſs, ſhame, and loſs by its Folly; yet in the World to come it muſt be its Partner and Companion in Hell-torments for evermore, in as much as it was the Inſtrument the Soul uſed in moſt of thoſe Sins committed by it in this World. And this is the caſe of all Bodies married to, and governed by Souls that have neither Reaſon, nor Religion enough prudently and ſoberly to order and govern their own Bodies.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

Sad and doleful therefore are the Laments and Complaints of the Bodies of Drunkards, againſt the Folly and Tyranny of their Souls; and as juſt as ſad. Let me therefore here act the part of an Advocate for your Bodies, which is a part of your ſelves, and to which by the Law of Nature you owe Love, Care, and Honour; or rather by a *Proſopopœa*, let me bring in the Body ſighing out its own Complaints in the Ears of its own Soul, and thus bemoaning it ſelf to it.

"Oh, my Soul! I have cauſe to lament the "day that ever I was married to ſuch a fot-"tiſh Fool as thou art, who art deſtitute both of "Wiſdom and Love to Rule and Govern me. I "may juſtly reſume *Job*'s Lamentation upon thy "account, and ſay with him, *Let the day periſh "wherein I was born, and the night wherein it was "ſaid, there is a man-child conceived. Why died I "not from the Womb? Why did I not give up the "Ghoſt when I came out of the Belly? For now ſhould "I have lien ſtill and been quiet; I ſhould have ſlept; "then I had been at reſt.*

"I have been a perfect Slave and Drudge to "thy unreaſonable Luſts and Impoſitions. I was "once an active, vigorous, comely Body, and "hadſt thou been Wiſe and Sober, I had been "happy. But thou haſt been a cruel Tyrant to "me, oppreſſing and loading me with more than "I was able to ſtand under. Thou haſt plunged "me many times into thoſe puddles of Exceſs, "wherein thou haſt drowned thy own Reaſon, "and my Health. My well-mixed Beauty is now

"turned

" turned into the colour of flaming Fire; my " Hands and Legs ſhake, my Tongue falters; " my natural Craſis and Temperament is deſtroy- " ed. Thou haſt made me miſerable in this World, " and intendeſt to make me more wretched in the " World to come.

" Sober Nature gave me my ſtint and meaſure. " I knew when it was enough, and gave thee ſuf- " ficient *Items* and Intimations (amidſt thy " fooliſh Frolicks) that I could neither with Ho- " nour or Safety bear one Glaſs more. But thou " waſt deaf to all my moans, and ſhewedſt more " Mercy to thy Horſe than me. Sick or well, " able or unable, live or die, I muſt take in the " full number of Cups and Bottles thou enjoynedſt " me to take. Like another *Pharoah*, thou haſt re- " quired of me the full tale, whether I had ſtrength " to perform it or no. Yea, like another Devil, " thou haſt ſometimes caſt me into fiery *Fevers*, " and watry *Dropſies*; and will next caſt me, if " thou continue this courſe, into Hell-fire it ſelf.

" Other Souls have ſet thee a better Pattern in " their more ſober and prudent Government of " their Bodies. They give their Bodies the true " Pleaſure of the Creature, by keeping them to " that happy Mediocrity in which it conſiſts. " They devote their Bodies to the Service of God; " thou haſt devoted me to the immediate Service " of the Devil. A Majeſtick Beauty ſits upon " their Faces; Sottiſhneſs and Folly upon mine. " Their Knees are daily bowed in Prayer to " God; mine ſhake and tremble in the Service " of the Devil. They enjoy pure and ſanctified " Pleaſures every day; but I am denied the ſober " Pleaſures of a Beaſt. Their Bodies will be hap-

" py

" py with their Souls in the World to come; but " I muſt ſuffer Eternally with thee, and for thee. " Thou haſt both conſumed me, and thy Eſtate " given to ſupport me; and now I am like to ſuf- " fer as much by want, as I have done by ex- " ceſs; and all this through thy miſgovernment. " Theſe Feet (if thou hadſt pleaſed to command " them) would as readily have carried thee to " thy Cloſet, or the Aſſemblies of God's People, " as to an Ale-houſe, or Tavern. Theſe Fingers " would have ſerved to open and turn the bleſſed " Pages, which contain the Oracles of God, as " to Cog a *Die*, or have Shuffled and Dealt a Pack " of *Cards*. This Tongue might have been me- " lodiouſly employed in ſinging the Praiſes of " God among his People, as well as in Swearing, " Roaring, and Singing among drunken Sots and " Fools, if thou hadſt been endued with govern- " ing Wiſdom.

" Thou knoweſt I could do nothing without " thee. Thou haſt a deſpotical Power over all " my Members. They are at thy beck, and thou " at the Devil's. Better had it been for me, had I " been the Body of a contemptible Worm or Fly, " than a Body animated and governed by ſuch a " ſottiſh Soul as thou art.

" And now, my Soul, what haſt thou to ſay for " thy ſelf? What tolerable account canſt thou give " to God or me, of theſe thy vile Abuſes of both?

SECT. V.

Now let us hear what the Soul of the Drunkard hath to plead in its own Excuſe and Defence for all his wrongs againſt God, miſchiefs to it ſelf, ruin

ruin to his Health, Name, and Eſtate. They have various Excuſes, tho not one ſound or rational one among them all. Such as they are, let them be tried by the Rule of Reaſon, if any Reaſon be yet left in them, who daily dethrone it by this worſe-than bruitiſh Practice.

That which they have to ſay for themſelves, is this,

1. That their Bodies are ſtrongly conſtituted, more capacious to receive, and able to bear greater quantities of Wine and Strong-drink than others are; and therefore, why ſhould they not drink down, and glory over thoſe that vye with them.

2. Others ſay, They would not take that Courſe they do, but that when they are Sober and Solitary, they are ſo preſs'd with the thoughts of their Debts and Incumbrances in the World, that they are upon a perfect Rack, and they find nothing like good-fellowſhip in a Tavern or Ale-houſe, ſo effectually relieving againſt the Cares and Anxieties of their Minds.

3. Some will tell us, they are drawn into it by the ſnare of Pleaſure, nothing being ſo grateful to their Palate, as their full load of generous Wine or Strong-drink. And ſeeing it is ſo pleaſant and delightſome to them, why ſhould they deny and abridge themſelves of their Pleaſure?

4. Others will profeſs they had never taken this Courſe, which they find upon many accounts pernicious to them, but that they are not able in Civility to deny their intimate Friends and Companions, eſpecially ſuch with whom they have concerns in Trade and Buſineſs, and they muſt drink as they do, or ſuffer loſs in their Trade, and beſide that, be ſtigmatized for *Phanaticks*.

5. They

5. They will alſo ſay, they are obliged in point of Loyalty to pledg him that Conſecrates (as they *Catechreſtically* call it) the firſt Glaſs to the King, or Perſons of Quality and Honour.

6. And laſtly, ſome will tell us, They have plentiful Eſtates that will bear ſuch Expences; and ſince their Pockets are full, why ſhould not their Heads and Stomachs be ſo too?

Beſide theſe ſix Apologies for *Drunkenneſs*, nothing falls into my Imagination pleadable for this Sin. We will weigh theſe that are pleaded, in the common Ballance of the Reaſon of Mankind, and try the validity of them one by one. And for the

Excuſe I.

And firſt, to what you ſay of the Capacity of your Bodies, Strength, and Ability of your Conſtitutions, to receive and bear greater Quantities of Wine and ſtrong Drink than others can; and therefore, why ſhould you not give a proof of it when challeng'd, and get Reputation to your ſelves by drinking down, and glorying over ſuch as vye with you?

To this I reply three things, which muſt be laid in the Counter-ballance, and let the Ballance be held in the upright Hand of your own Reaſon.

1. A ſtrong and vigorous Conſtitution will be readily acknowledged to be ſo great an external Bleſſing and Mercy, that no Man of ſound Intellectuals ought to do any thing to deſtroy it; but is obliged to uſe all proper Methods for the Preſervation of it. If therefore Temperance ſhall be found to preſerve it, and exceſs to impair and deſtroy

deſtroy it; let your own Reaſon judge which of theſe two Courſes you are obliged to take. Conſult either the beſt Phyſicians, or your own, and other Mens Experience, and they will tell you, that *Apoplexies*, *Palſies*, *Gout*, and innumerable other Diſeaſes, are bred by ſuch Exceſſes in the ſoundeſt and ſtrongeſt Conſtitutions, and Death it ſelf haſtened by ſuch intemperate courſes; whereas Temperance and Sobriety might have made your Lives more comfortable and durable. As ſtrong as you are, frequent Drunkenneſs will bring *Cain*'s Curſe upon your vigorous Bodies, and make you go ſhaking and trembling (as he did) about the World.

2. Let it be demanded of your own Reaſon, Whether it do really judg that God beſtowed more Strength and Vigour upon your Bodies, than he hath upon others, to Arm a ſtronger Enemy than others are, to fight more vigorouſly againſt him, than others do, or can do? Or whether it were not deſigned by him for greater Uſe and Service to his Glory in the World, than others of his People (how willing ſoever they be) can do for want of that ſtrength you have? I am confident no Man of ſound Intellectuals will dare to aſſert the former, or deny the latter.

3. And laſtly, for your glorying in Drinking down, and conquering others, you will certainly put your own reaſon to a bluſh; by offering ſuch a Plea as this to it. You are not yet arrived to Impudence enough to deny Drunkenneſs to be a Sin, and your Reaſon is yet ſound enough, eaſily and naturally to infer, That by how much the more any Man exceeds and goes beyond others in Sin, by ſo much the greater Sinner that Man is. And

And as for the Honour and Glory you talk of in exceeding others in your Abilities to drink, your Reaſon will quickly make you aſhamed of that Glory; and prove, as well as aſſert it to be a Mark of baſeſt Infamy.

Do you think that *Lombard* was really honoured, or ſtigmatized, whom *Tiberius Cæſar* dub'd a Knight for drinking off three Gallons of Wine at one Draught, and Sirnamed him *Trivongius*, that is to ſay, the *Three Gallon Knight*; which Story *Pliny* in his Natural Hiſtory relates to the perpetual Infamy of them both? Or, think you it added to the Glory of *Tiberius* himſelf, who Knighted this *Three Gallon* (not thrice Gallant) *Knight*, to have his Name changed among the People, from *Tiberius* into *Biberius*, as afterwards they did the Name of that Monſter *Nero* into *Mero*? *Pliny Nat. Hiſt. Lib.* 14. *Cap.* 22.

Gentlemen, I appeal to your own Reaſon, if the vaſt Continent you have within you for Wine and ſtrong Drink, be really your Honour; whether the *Butt* or *Hogſhead* whence you have it, be not for the ſame reaſon much more honourable than you? Your Reaſon will plainly give the Concluſion.

But, oh! conſider not only what Reaſon ſaith, but what God the Fountain of that Reaſon ſaith in *Iſa.* 5. 22. *Wo to them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of ſtrength to mingle ſtrong drink.* Methinks it ſhould make you ſit in as little eaſe upon the Tavern, or Ale-houſe Bench, as that Court-Paraſite ſat at a rich Banquet, furniſhed with variety of Dainties, and all ſorts of generous Wine, over whoſe head *Dionyſius* cauſed an heavy Sword

Sword to be hanged with the Point downward by a single Hair, every moment ready to drop perpendicularly upon it.

Excuse II.

As for those that throw themselves into these Excesses on purpose to delude those anxious Cares and Thoughts, which cruciate and oppress them, whenever they are Sober and Solitary: I shall only propound three plain Questions to the small remainders of Reason in them, which yet I presume sufficient to determine rightly upon them.

Quest. I.

Whether they think that which greatly encreaseth Want and Poverty, be a rational Cure, and proper Remedy of it? And whether a Jar of Oyl be not as fit to quench a Flame, as Tavern and Ale-house Scores and Reckonings are to buoy up a sinking Trade, and keep *Bailiffs* from Mens doors? Certainly none but a sottish Fool can think it to be otherwise. Your own improvidence, or God's afflictive Providence have brought you into other Mens Books; and certainly you cannot think, if you be in your Wits, that *Chamberlains* Bills for so many Bottles of Wine, and Flaggons of Beer, will be accepted by your Creditors for good Bills, to quit your Scores with them. Were you Sober, Frugal, and Industrious, you would put your selves thereby into a better way to obtain a Blessing from God, and Respects, and Forbearance from Men, than in the Course you now take.

Quest.

Queſt. 2.

Nor can you without manifeſt impudence propound ſuch a Queſtion as this to your own Reaſon, Whether the addition of Injuſtice to Prophaneneſs, be a rational Plea or excuſe for it? And is not that the very caſe here? Whoſe Money is that you ſo laviſhly and prodigally waſte out of your conſuming Eſtates? 'tis either your Creditors, or the ſmall remains of your own. Whether the one or the other, methinks that Wine and Drink ſhould not go down very pleaſantly, which muſt be mingled with manifeſt injuſtice, or with the tears, and (in a ſenſe) the Blood of your Wives and Children. If your Reaſons can allow theſe things for Lawful Excuſes, then you are excuſed, elſe ſelf-condemned.

Queſt. 3.

I ſhall trouble your Reaſon with the deciſion but of one Queſtion more, and 'tis briefly and plainly this.

Whether the addition of far greater troubles, or cauſes of troubles to the inner man, be a proper expedient to alleviate and eaſe the loads and burdens of your outward troubles, already grown almoſt too heavy for you to bear.

I dare venture all that I am worth, upon ſound Reaſon's ſide, that it will never allow or comprobate ſuch an abſurdity, as the affirmative part of this Queſtion draws along with it.

Believe it, Sirs, all the outward neceſſities, cares and fears, which now oppreſs you upon the ſcore of worldly affairs (which frame not to your minds) are much more tolerable, and comparatively

tively light and easy, to the Stings, Wounds, and Lashes of a guilty Conscience: But when all these inward Troubles shall be superadded to your outward Troubles, they will in conjunction make a burthen too heavy for Man to bear.

What ever Cares or Troubles Providence involves any good Man in, in the honest and painful pursuit of his civil Calling, he may in a great measure relieve his burthened Spirit under them, by the comfortable Testimony of his own Conscience, and his free Addresses to God in Prayer. These will sweetly support him under his other Intanglements and Perplexities in the World. But the Course you take, does not only strike away these props from under your Minds; but doubles and trebles the burthen upon them. Were Men but once acquainted with that relief and chearfulness of Spirit which a good Conscience, and a Spiritual Address to God in Prayer, afford in the midst of Troubles, they would run to their Closets, rather than to Taverns and Ale-houses, to divert and cure their Troubles. I leave it therefore before your own Reason to consider, what weight or validity there is in this Second Excuse for Drunkenness.

Excuse III.

Others plead they are drawn into this Sin by Pleasure and Delight, whose Charms are too strong for them to resist.

In this, as in all the former, I resolve to make you your own Judges. Give me leave but to state the Questions right, and let your own Reason freely determine them. And what fairer dealing

can

can men that exerciſe Reaſon expect? And let the firſt Queſtion be this;

Queſt. 1.

Whether the Pleaſures of Temperance do not far excel thoſe of Intemperance? If they do, then this your Plea is vain and irrational. For you fooliſhly chooſe a leſſer Pleaſure, and refuſe a greater and ſweeter one. And that you do ſo in this caſe, no wiſe man can deny or doubt.

For temperate drinking refreſhes the Body, and no way burthens it, as exceſſive drinking doth. And that which burthens Nature can never be equally pleaſant with that, which yields nothing but due refreſhment. Temperance doth not vitiate, but raiſeth the pure and ordinate Appetite of Nature to its juſt pitch and height; in which temper, and at which height, it is moſt capable of the ſweeteſt pleaſure from the Creature. As the Strings of a *Lute* give us the ſweeteſt and moſt delicious Notes when they are not let down too low, but are all fixed at their due height.

Temperance gives us the moſt pleaſing Enjoyment of the good things of this Life, ſtill leaving the Mind free and fit for the more Spiritual and ſweet Enjoyments of a better and more excellent Life; which Exceſs never did, nor can do.

Moreover, Temperance maintains the manly grace and majeſty of the Countenance, but Exceſs totally diſguiſes it. It draws the lines of Drunkards faces into a form much like thoſe ridiculous *Dutch Pictures*, which ſome ſet upon their Chimney-pieces, to move laughter in thoſe that behold them.

Now by the vote of univerſal Reaſon, that Pleaſure which refreſhes the Body, but no way burthens it, which raiſes the ordinate and unvitiated Appetite of Nature to its juſt pitch and due height, which gives Nature the ſweeteſt refreſhment, leaving it always fitter and freer for higher and better pleaſures, which maintains the manly grace and majeſty of the Countenance, and makes not a wiſe man look like a Fool or an Antick, muſt needs be better than the lower and flatter Pleaſures of a burthened Body, and vitiated Palate, which draw after them ſo great a train of preſent miſchiefs (which Temperance avoids) beſides far heavier and more durable ones in the Life to come.

Queſt. 2.

But if the preſent Pleaſures of Temperance were in ſome reſpect inferior to thoſe of Exceſs (which I have proved they neither are, nor can be) I demand in the ſecond place, whether the loſs of your Honour and Health, your Time and Eſtate, your preſent Peace, and future hopes, do not make ſuch ſenſitive Pleaſures baſe and inferior, compared with thoſe of Temperance and Sobriety? Do you in good earneſt think a Glaſs or two above what ſatisfies and refreſhes Nature, can recompence for all that ſhame, ſickneſs, poverty and guilt that follows it? If you think ſo, ſin hath turned you into Brutes, and made you utterly uncapable of all Arguments and manly conſiderations to reduce and recover you.

Exceſſe

Excuſe IV.

You ſay you would not haunt Taverns and Ale-Houſes as you do, but that you are drawn in by Company and Buſineſs, which you cannot well reſiſt or avoid, and ſhould you do ſo, it would be to your loſs; and beſides that, you ſhould be branded for *Phanaticks*.

I deny not but there is a Snare in vain Company; yet give me leave to propound a few, plain and eaſy Queſtions to your Reaſon.

Queſt. 1.

Why muſt the importunity of Good Fellows (as you call them) be an irreſiſtible Temptation to you, and deprive you of all power to deny them, whilſt you diſcern the Snares and Miſchiefs they draw you into? This ſeems to be a thing unaccountable to Reaſon. Suppoſe you were allowed to ſpend the longeſt Summers Day in the higheſt gratifications of all your Senſes together, or ſucceſſively one after another, upon condition that you would endure the Torments of the Rack till that day twelvemonth came about again; do you think the importunity of all your intimates in the world would prevail with you to accept the Pleaſures of a day under ſuch a condition as this? And yet what are the Torments of a year upon the Rack, to the Torments of Hell for ever and ever? Or to come lower; ſuppoſe one of thoſe lewd Companions, not worth a Groat if every man had his own, ſhould requeſt you to lend him an Hundred Pound upon his own ſecu-

rity, could you find no power (think you) to deny him, especially if the loss of that Hundred Pound would certainly ruin you? If you would deny him (as I doubt not but in such a case you would) tell me then, why you should not find power to deny him when he asks a far greater matter than an Hundred Pound, even the Peace, Purity and Safety of your Souls, as well as the Health of your Bodies, and Honour of your Names? Why then should you be so easy and flexible when they ask the latter, and so stiff and unperswadable to the former?

Quest. 2.

You say you have Business and Concerns in Trade to dispatch in such Places and Companies, and this draws you into the Snares of Excess. I will not deny but men may lawfully transact their Business in such Places, and there may be a conveniency, and sometimes a necessity for it: But that's not the Case. The Question referred to the determination of your Reason, is this, *Why Drunkenness must accompany Business?* and whether a man be not more fit to transact his Business, and drive Bargains of the greatest value, whilst his Body and Mind are cool, sober and temperate, than when his Reason is beclouded and deposed, by Drunkenness? How many men have undone themselves, their Wives and Children by Drunken-Bargains!

Besides, I must tell you, that in all such Drunken Meetings, the Devil comes to drive his Bargain with you, as well as your other Customers. He bids for your Souls, and offers you such Pleasures

as

as you there find in exchange for them, and is content to make your dying-day the time of your delivering them into his poſſeſſion. How do you like ſuch Trading as this, *Gentlemen*?

Queſt. 3.

You ſay, ſhould you refuſe to accompany them, and do as they do, you ſhould be branded for *Phanaticks*. I would fain know, whether ſuch a Plea for Drunkenneſs as this, doth not juſtly caſt the greateſt reproach of *Phanaticiſm* upon your ſelves, and ſet a Mark of true Honour upon thoſe men whom the world unjuſtly ſtigmatizes with that Title? *Gentlemen*, I do aſſure you the *Phanaticks* (as you call them) have reaſon to thank you for the Honour and Juſtice you have done them, in acknowledging them to be none of the Members of your helliſh Society, but Perſons of a more ſober and honourable Character. And I appeal to your Reaſon, whether it would not be more for your Honour, to wear the unjuſt Title of a *Phanatick*, than the juſt cenſure of a Drunken Sot.

Excuſe 5.

You ſay you are obliged in point of Loyalty to pledge him that conſecrates the firſt Glaſs to the Health of the King, or any Perſon of Eminency. I leave it ſtill to your Reaſon to be Judge,

1. Whether the King have cauſe to account the manifeſt breach of the Laws by which he governs, to be a ſignal expreſſion of his Subjects

Loyalty to him? Is not his Royal Authority his Honour and Safety in his Laws? And is he not finely honoured, think you, by such drunken Loyalty as this? Gentlemen, you have a King over you of sounder Intellectuals, and more exemplary Temperance and Sobriety, than to be thus imposed upon.

2. Can you think he reckons his Health in the least degree advanced or secured by the ruin and subversion of his Subjects Health? No no; Did the genteelest Drunkards in *England* enquire, they would quickly find, it would more please him, if they would consult their own Health better, and pray for his more sincerely and fervently than they do.

Excuse VI.

Your last Excuse is, That you have plentiful Estates that will bear it; and since your Pockets are full, why should your Heads or Stomachs be empty?

Question.

The only Question I would here state, and leave your own Reason to determine, is this, Whether you think the expence of the redundancy and over-plus of your Estates in Excess and Drunkenness, be the very end and design God aimed at in bestowing those things with such a bountiful hand upon you? and whether the expence of it in this way, will please him as well, as if you clothed the Naked, and fed the Hungry with it, and brought

brought the Blessings of them that are ready to perish, upon you and your Families? Ah, *Gentlemen*, you must come to a day of reckoning. Your Reasons and Consciences can never tell you, you can make up as comfortable an account with God by setting down so many Hundred Pounds in Wine and Strong Drink more than was necessary or beneficial: *Item* so many Thousand Pounds lost in Play: So much upon Whores; as if you set down so much to feed and cloath the Naked and Hungry. So that all your Excuses for this Sin, are baffled by your own Reason; and it was easy to conclude, that such a Traytor to Reason as Drunkenness is, which hath so often dethroned it, could not possibly receive a more favourable Judgment and Sentence than this now given upon it.

Let all Drunkards henceforth consider what a voluntary madness the Sin of Drunkenness is, how it unmans them, and sets them below the very Brutes. A Grave *Father* calls it rightly

A Distemper of the Head; a subversion of the Senses, a tempest in the Tongue; the Storm of the Body, the shipwrack of Virtue, the loss of Time, a wilful madness, a pleasant Devil, a sugar'd Poyson, a sweet Sin, which he

Turbatio capitis, subversio sensûs, tempestas linguæ, procella corporis, naufragium virtutis, amissio temporis, insania voluntaria, blandè Dæmon, dulce venenum, suave pectum, quam qui habet, ipsum non habet, quam qui facit, peccatum non tantum

facit, ſed ipſe totus eſt peccatum.

that hath, hath not himſelf; and he that commits it, doth not only commit Sin, but himſelf is altogether Sin.

'Tis a Sin at which the moſt ſober *Heathens* bluſhed. The Policy of the *Spartans* was more commendable than their Piety, in making Men drunk, that their Children might gaze upon them as a Monſter, and be ſcared for ever from ſuch an horrid Practice. He that is maſtered by Drunkenneſs, can never be Maſter of his own Counſels. Both Reaſon and Religion condemn this Courſe. Make a Pauſe therefore where you are, and rather throw that Wine or Beer upon the Ground, which elſe will caſt thy Body upon the Ground, and thy Soul and Body into Hell.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Containing the reſult and iſſue of the Third Conſultation with Reaſon, upon the Caſe of Uncleanneſs; and the true Report of the Determination of every mans Reaſon, with reſpect thereunto.

SECT. I.

THE Bountiful and Indulgent God hath made more abundant proviſion for the Pleaſure and Delight of Rational, than of Brutal Beings: And his Wiſe and Righteous Laws order and limit their Pleaſures to their great advantage; his Allowances under thoſe Reſtrictions being large and full enough. Both Reaſon and Experience aſſure us, that the trueſt Pleaſures are moſt freely and honourably to be enjoyed within the Pale and Boundary of his Laws; and that there are none fit for the enjoyment of a Man or Chriſtian, to be found without or beyond them.

That prudent Owner provides beſt for his Cattel, who puts them into incloſed fragrant Fields, where they have plenty of proper and pleaſant Food, Sweet and pure Springs of Water, the pleaſant Covert of ſhady Trees, and all that is either neceſſary or convenient for them; altho' thoſe Fields be ſo incloſed within Pales or Walls,

that they cannot ſtray without thoſe Boundaries it to other mens Grounds, to be by them impounded, and brought back lank, tired, and dirty, to their Owner; or by ſtraying into Waſts and Wilderneſſes, fall a Prey (as Straglers uſe to do) to Wolves and Lyons.

God envies not any true, rational and proper pleaſure to Men or Women; when he bounds them in by his Command, within the allowance whereof, ſufficient proviſion is made for the benefit and delight of propagation. And though it be all mens Duty, to tremble at the awful Solemnity, yet it would be any mans ſin to repine and murmur at the ſtrictneſs and ſeverity of his Command delivered with Thunder and Lightning from Mount *Sinai*, *Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery*. Man's honourable Liberty, and God's wiſe and juſt Reſtraint and Limitation thereof, are both ſet together before our eyes, in that one Scripture, *Heb.* 13. 4. *Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge.* Here's a liberal allowance granted, and a ſevere Puniſhment threatned for the inordinancies and exorbitancies of boundleſs and ungovernable Luſts. God will judge with temporal Judgments in this world; and upon impenitent perſiſtents, with eternal Judgments in the world to come.

SECT. II.

Such is the corruption of Man's Nature by the Fall, that it hates Incloſures, Reſtraints and Limitations. Theſe things which were intended to regulate, ſerve only to ſharpen and enrage their ſenſual

sensual Appetite. No Fruit so sweet to corrupt Nature, as forbidden Fruit. *Natura in vetitum semper, cupimusque negata.* The very restraint of Evil makes it look like a pleasant and desirable Good. Sons of *Belial* can endure no yoke of restraint. There's a great truth in that Observation of the Divine *Herbert*, That if God had laid all common, man himself would have been the Incloser. For his Reason and Experience would have plainly informed him of the great and manifold advantages of distinction and propriety. How many Quarrels and barbarous Murders have been occasioned by Whores! which by keeping within God's bounds and rules, had been both honestly and honourably prevented.

Were Men left to that Liberty Brutes are, to scatter their Lusts promiscuously, Fathers would not know their own Children, nor Children their Fathers; whereby both their Duties and Comforts would be prescinded together. Such Mischiefs as these would make men glad of that Inclosure, which the Laws of God have made for them. But behold with admiration the perverse wickedness of Corrupt Nature, manifested in this, that because God hath enclosed and secured their Relations to them by his Laws (which Inclosure is every way to their advantage) yet this makes their Lusts the more head-strong and outragious, and they cannot take that comfort in their own, because their own, that they think to find in another's, because another's.

Remarkable to this purpose is that Relation of Mr. *Fermin*'s, which he received from his near Relation, who was Minister *Real Christian*, pag. 60.

ſter to the Company of *Engliſh* Merchants in *Pruſſia*. The *Conſul* or Governour of that Company being a Married Man, and that to a very proper and comely Woman, was yet enſlaved to others not to be compared with his own Wife for comelineſs. This Miniſter dealt with him about it. One Argument he urged was this; That of all Men he had the leaſt Temptation, having a Wife ſo comely, that few Women were like her. He anſwered, yea, were ſhe not my Wife I could love her. Had ſhe been his Whore, he could have loved her; he thought none like her; but becauſe ſhe was his Wife, hedged in by God, he cared not for her. Oh! what hearts have Men, that they ſhould ever think that to be beſt for them, which is moſt croſs to God! Why ſhould ſtolen Waters be ſweeter than thoſe of our own Fountain?

SECT. III.

God's choice muſt needs be far better for us than our own. Ordinate and lawful Pleaſures and Enjoyments far better and ſweeter than exorbitant and forbidden ones. And the Reaſon is evident and undeniable. For amongſt all the operations of the Mind, its reflex acts are the acts that beſt reliſh pleaſure. And indeed without ſelf-reflexion, a man cannot tell whether he delights or no. All ſenſe of pleaſure implies ſome reflection of the Mind: And thoſe pleaſures of a man muſt needs be the ſweeteſt, which afford the ſweeteſt reflections upon them afterward: And thoſe the baſeſt pleaſures, which are accompanied and followed

lowed with preſent regret, or the ſtinging and cutting reflections of the Conſcience upon them afterwards.

Lawful and ordinate Enjoyments are as Honey without the Sting. Forbidden Pleaſures are imbitter'd and extinguiſhed by theſe regrets and reflections of the Conſcience. They are like that pleaſant Fruit which the *Spaniards* found in the *Indies*, which were ſweet to the taſte, but ſo environed and armed on every ſide with dangerous Briers and Thorns, that they tore not only their Cloathes off their Backs, but the Skin off their Fleſh to come at them: And therefore they called them *Comfits in Hell*; and ſuch are all forbidden and unlawful Pleaſures.

A *Merchant* (ſaith the forenamed Author) dining with the *Fryars* at *Dantzick*, his Entertainment was very noble. After he had dined and ſeen all, the Merchant fell to commending their Pleaſant Life. Yea, ſaid one of the *Friars* to him) we live gallantly indeed, if we had any body to go to Hell for us when we die. You ſee what mingles with Mens Senſual and Sinful Luſts. Pag. 63.

2. Your Honour is ſecured by keeping within God's Bounds and Limits. *Marriage is honourable in all.* Here Guilt can neither wrong your Conſciences, nor Infamy your Reputations. Fornicators and Adulterers go up and down the world, as men burnt in the Hand: Their Conſcience laſhes them within, and men point at them abroad. They are a terror to themſelves, and a ſcorn to men.

3. The

3. The Health of the Body is secured by chast and regular Enjoyments; but exposed to destruction the other way. God hath plagued the Inordinacy of mens Lusts with most strange and horrid Diseases. That *Morbus Gallicus*, *Sudor Anglicus*, and *Plica Polonica* were Judgments sent immediately by God's own hand, as the Witnesses of his high displeasure, against the bold and daring contemners of his sacred and awful Command. Thus as *Prov.* 5. 11. *They mourn at last, when their flesh and body are consumed.* Other sins are committed in the Body, but this against it, as well as in it.

4. The blast and waste of our Estates (which is the usual consequent of uncleanness) is prevented and avoided, by keeping within God's Rules. The truth of what the Scripture tells us, *Prov.* 10. 5. is often exemplified before our eyes; that *by reason of a whorish woman, a man is brought to a morsel of bread.* Adultery gives a man Rags for his Livery; it lodges his Substance in the House of Strangers, and entails wants and curses on him and his.

5. In a word, Continence or lawful Marriage exposes not the Soul to the eternal wrath of God, as Uncleanness doth, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. This sin does not only shut a man out of his own House, and the Hearts of good men, but out of Heaven it self, without thorow Repentance and Reformation.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

The caſe ſtanding thus, 'tis matter of juſt Admiration how the Sin of Uncleanneſs ſhould grow ſo Epidemical and Common, as it doth, ſeeing ſuch as live in this filthy Courſe, muſt needs counteract and oppoſe their own Reaſon and Intereſt together. For they forſake God's way, which gives them as much liberty as can be reaſonably deſired, and caſt themſelves into a courſe of Life, clog'd with all manner of temporal and eternal Miſeries of Soul and Body, Honour and Eſtate.

The plain Rule and Dictate of common Reaſon, which I laid down before, being applied to this particular Caſe, manifeſtly condemns it. For ſeeing Honeſty and Chaſtity comprizes the true Pleaſure, Profit, and Honour of the whole Man, is more congruous to humane Nature, and Preſervative of it, it ought therefore to be preferred in the Eſtimation and Choice of all Men to unlawful adulterous Pleaſures, which (for the Reaſons above) are inferior in themſelves to chaſt, conjugal Enjoyments; and beſides that, are attended and followed with ſuch a Train of preſent and future Miſeries, deſtructive to the whole Man.

And yet for all this, to the amazement of all ſerious Obſervers, never was any Age more infamous for this Sin, than the preſent Age is, and that under the clear ſhining Light of the Goſpel.

What the ſpecial Cauſes and Inducements to the overflowing and abounding of this Sin, are in the preſent Age, will be well worth the enquiring and ſifting at this time

SECT.

SECT. V.

Inducement 1.

'Tis highly probable the influencing Examples of great Men have had no ſmall hand in the ſpreading of this abominable and crying Sin amongſt all inferior Ranks and Orders of Men.

Great Mens ill Examples, like a bag of Poyſon in the Fountain, corrupt and infect Multitudes. The Vulgar think they are priviledged, or at the leaſt very much excuſed, when they do but follow the Preſidents and Examples of Great and Eminent Perſons.

But this will be found a weak and fooliſh Plea for Uncleanneſs, which will never be able to endure the teſt of your own Reaſon. For the inbred Notions of a God, and of a future Life of Retribution being ſo firmly ſealed and engraven upon humane Nature, that they can never be utterly eradicated; your own Reaſon will argue from thoſe inbred Notions in this manner, and how you will be able to refel the Argument, and eſcape Conviction and Self-condemnation, quite ſurmounts my Imagination, whatever it do yours. And thus it will diſpute, and *Dilemma* you, do what you can.

That God, before whom greater and leſſer, honourable and baſer Sinners ſhall appear in Judgment, will be either partial or impartial in his Judgments upon them. There is, or there is not Reſpect of Perſons with him. If there be (which both his Nature and Word utterly deny) then thoſe great and honourable Adulterers or Fornicators,

cators, whoſe Examples you follow, may haply be excuſed for their Eminency and Honours ſake; but you that have no ſuch Eminency and Honour in the World, as they have, muſt be condemned, tho you thought to eſcape as well as they.

But if there be no Partiality, or Reſpect of Perſons with God (as moſt aſſuredly there is none) then both greater and leſſer, honourable and baſer Adulterers muſt be condemned together to the ſame common and intolerable Miſery.

So that to take any (tho the leaſt) encouragement to Sin from the Preſidents and Examples of Great Ones, is a moſt ſenſeleſs and irrational thing, utterly unworthy of one that believes there is a juſt and impartial God; and he is worſe than a Devil that believes it not. For the Devils themſelves believe and tremble.

SECT. VI.

Inducement 2.

But others would perſwade us they are drawn into this Sin by a kind of inevitable neceſſity, they being neither able to contain, nor Marry.

They are not yet arrived to Eſtate ſufficient to maintain a Family with Reputation: But when they have gotten enough by Trade, or by the fall of their paternal Eſtates to live in equal Reputation with their Neighbours, then they deſign to alter their Courſe of Life, and abandon theſe Follies.

But, *Reader*, if this be thy Plea for Uncleanneſs, thou ſhalt have as fair a Tryal for a foul Fact,

Fact, as thine own heart can deſire; be ſtill thine own Judg, and let thine own Reaſon give a fair Anſwer to theſe three pertinent Queſtions.

Queſt. 1.

Whether Whoredom be as likely and promiſing a way to engage God's Bleſſing upon your Trades and Employments, as Continence or conjugal Chaſtity are? That is to ſay plainly, Whether Obedience and Diſobedience to the Law of God, be all one, and pleaſe him alike? You know your ſucceſs of Buſineſs is not in your own hand; 'tis God that giveth thee Power to get Wealth. His Bleſſing maketh Rich. And is Sin as likely a way to engage his Bleſſing, as Duty and Obedience is? I am confident your own Reaſon will never give it.

Object. If you ſay ſuch Perſons proſper in the World, as well as others for ought you can ſee.

Sol. The contrary is evident in the common Obſervation of Mankind; by reaſon of Whoredom, Multitudes are brought to a piece of Bread. And tho God ſuffer ſome unclean Perſons to proſper in the World, yet Chaſtity with Poverty, is infinitely preferable to ſuch accurſed Proſperity.

Queſt. 2.

Whether the Courſe of Sin you are now driving and accuſtoming your ſelves to, will not in all probability ſo infatuate and bewitch you, that when you come into a married Eſtate, you ſhall ſtill be under the Power of this Sin, and ſo ruin

ruin the Perſon you Marry, as well as your ſelf? If the Word of God ſignify any thing with you, it ſignifieth this, that there is a Witchcraft in Whoredom; and comparatively ſpeaking, *None that go to her return again, neither take they hold of the Paths of Life*, Prov. 2. 18, 19.

Object. If to invalidate this Teſtimony you ſhall ſay, That he that ſpake this, did himſelf go after ſtrange Women.

Sol. 'Tis true, he did ſo; but then withal, you muſt remember, that he hath warned you by his own ſad Experience, that you never follow him in thoſe his footſteps, Eccleſ. 7. 26. *I find* (ſaith he) *more bitter than death, the woman whoſe heart is ſnares and nets, and her hands as bands. Whoſo pleaſeth God, ſhall eſcape from her; but the ſinner ſhall be taken by her.*

Queſt. 3.

And laſtly, I demand of your reaſon, whether it can, or will allow any place to this Plea of neceſſity, before you have uſed and tried all God's appointed Remedies, which are ſufficient to prevent that neceſſity you plead.

There are lawful Remedies enough, ſufficient with God's bleſſing to keep you from ſuch a neceſſity to Sin; ſuch as Temperance, and more abſtemiouſneſs in Meats and Drinks; avoiding laſcivious Books, Play-houſes, and filthy Company; laborious Diligence in your lawful Callings, and fervent Prayer for mortifying and preventing Grace; and if Temptations ſtill ſtir amidſt all theſe preventives, then caſting your ſelves upon the Directions and Supply of Providence

dence in the honourable Eſtate of Marriage. Never plead neceſſity, whilſt all theſe preventives might, but have not been uſed.

SECT. VII.

Inducement 3.

Others plead the abſence of their lawful Remedies, and preſence of tempting Objects. This is the Caſe of our Soldiers and Seamen. But tho this be the moſt colourable pretence of all the reſt, yet your own Reaſon and Conſciences will even in this Caſe ſo *Dilemma* and *Non-plus* you, that if you will adventure upon the Sin, you ſhall never have their leave or conſent with you. For they have a ſpecial and peculiar conſideration of you, as Perſons more eminently and immediately expoſed to the Dangers of Death than other Men. And thus (would you but give them a fair hearing) they will expoſtulate and reaſon out the matter with you.

Either thou ſhalt eſcape, or not eſcape the hazard of this Voyage or Battel. If thou fall (as to be ſure many will) will this be an honourable, ſafe, and comfortable cloſe and winding up of thy Life! What, from a Whore to thy Grave! God forbid. From burning Luſts to everlaſting Burnings! Better thou hadſt never been born.

Or if thou do eſcape and return again to thy Family, how canſt thou look her in the Face, with whom thou haſt ſo baſely broken thy Marriage Vow and Covenant? Whatever elſe thou bring home with thee, to be ſure thou ſhalt bring

bring home Guilt with thee, and a Blot never to be wiped away.

Object. If you ſay, you are not ſuch Fools to publiſh your own Shame, you'll follow *Cæſar*'s Advice to the young Adulterer, *Si non caſtè, tamen cautè*; If I act not chaſtly, I'll act cautelouſly.

Sol. Your Reaſon and Conſcience will both deride the Weakneſs and Folly of this Pretence. For they both very well know, no Man ſins ſo ſecretly, but he Sins before two infallible Witneſſes, *viz.* God and his own Conſcience, and that the laſt and leaſt of theſe, is more than a thouſand Witneſſes. That God uſually detects it in this World, carry it as cloſely as you will; but to be ſure, it ſhall be publiſhed as upon the Houſe-top, before Men and Angels in the great Day.

SECT. VIII.

Inducement 4.

Another Inducement to this Sin, (and the laſt I ſhall mention) is the *Commonneſs* of it, which abates the Shame of it.

What need they trouble themſelves ſo much, or be ſo ſhy of that which is practiced by thouſands, which is ſo frequently acted in every place, and little made of it?

But if either your Reaſon or Conſcience will admit this Plea for good and lawful, the Devil hath utterly blinded or infatuated the one or other, as will evidently appear by the following Reaſons. For,

Reaſon

Reason I.

If the thing be Evil, (as you cannot deny but it is) then by how much the commoner, by so much the worse it must needs be. Indeed, if a thing be good, by how much the commoner, so much the better; but to attribute this essential Property of Good unto Evil, is to confound and destroy the difference between them, and make Good and Evil both alike.

Reason II.

If the commonness of Uncleanness will excuse you, it will more excuse all others that shall commit this Sin after you; and still by how much more the numbers of Adulterers and Fornicators are increased, still the less scruple Men need make to commit it; and so the whole Community shall in a little time be so infected and defiled, that Christian Kingdoms shall quickly become like *Sodom*, and God provoked to deal with them, as he did by that wretched City.

Reason III.

If the commonness of Sin be an Excuse and Plea for it, suppose the Roads should be more infested than they are with Highway-men, so that every Month you should see whole Cart-loads of them drawn to *Tyburn*; would your Reason infer from thence, that because Hanging is grown so common, you need not scruple so much, as you were wont to do, to Take a Purse, or Pistol

Piſtol an honeſt innocent Traveller upon the Road?

Object. If you ſhall ſay, Uncleanneſs is not ſo coſtly a Sin as Robbery is, there's a great deal of difference between *Tyburn*, and a Whore-houſe puniſhment.

Sol. There is a great difference indeed, even as much as is betwixt *Tyburn* and Hell, or a ſmall Mulct in the Courts of Men, and the Eternal Wrath of a Sin-revenging God. So great will the difference betwixt the Puniſhments of all Sins by God, and by Men be found.

Thus you ſee, *Gentlemen*, the common Pleas for Uncleanneſs over-ruled by your own Reaſons and Conſciences.

We live in a plentiful Land, abounding with all the Comforts of this Life, and with thouſands of full-fed Wantons, of whom the Lord complains this day, as he did of the *Jews*, whom that flowing-land vomited out, *Jer.* 5. 7. *When I had fed them to the full, they committed Adultery, and aſſembled themſelves by Troops in the Harlots houſes; they were as fed Horſes in the morning, every one neighed after his Neighbours Wife.* How many ſuch *Stallions* are thus neighing in the fat Paſtures of this good Land!

Nor do I wonder at all to ſee the growth of *Atheiſm*, in a Land ſwarmed and over-run with ſo many thouſands of Blaſphemers, Drunkards, and Adulterers. It was a grave Obſervation of that gallant *Moraliſt*, *Plutarch*, If *Epicurus* (ſaith he) ſhould but grant a God in his full Perfections, he muſt change his Life preſently, he muſt be a Swine no longer.

The

The Lord purge out this crying Abomination alſo, with Atheiſm and Drunkenneſs the inlets of it, which darken our Glory, and threaten to make us deſolate.

CHAP. VI.

Wherein Reaſon and Conſcience are once more conſulted about that bitter and implacable Enmity, found in thouſands this day, againſt all ſirious Piety, and the ſtrict Profeſſors thereof, who differ from them in ſome external Modes and Rites of Worſhip, and their Determination upon that Caſe impartially reported.

SECT. I.

MAN is naturally a ſociable Creature, delighting in Company and Converſe. He that affects to live by, and to himſelf, muſt be (ſaith the Philoſopher) ἢ θεὸς, ἢ θηρίον, either a God that is ſelf-ſufficient, and ſtands in need of none; or a Wild Beaſt ſo ſavage and fierce, that it can endure nothing but it ſelf.

This natural Quality of ſociableneſs is diverſly improved. Sometimes *ſinfully* in wicked Combinations to do miſchief, like the herding together of Wolves and Tigers. Such was the Confederation,

federation of *Simeon* and *Levi*, Brethren in Iniquity, *Gen.* 49. 56. Sometimes 'tis improved *Civilly* for the more orderly and proſperous Management of human Affairs. Thus all civilized Countries have improved it for common Security and Benefit. And ſometimes *Religiouſly*, for the better promoting of each others ſpiritual and eternal Good.

Now the more firmly any Civil or Religious Societies are knit together by Love, and coaleſce in Unity, by ſo much the better they are ſecured againſt their common Enemies and Dangers, and become ſtill the more proſperous and flouriſhing within and among themſelves. For when every Man finds his particular Intereſt involved in the publick Safety and Security, (as every private Cabbin and Paſſenger is in the ſafety of the Ship) every particular Perſon will then ſtand ready to contribute his uttermoſt Aſſiſtance for the publick Intereſt both in Peace and War. United Force, we all know, is more than ſingle; and in this Senſe we ſay, *Unus homo, nullus homo*; one Man is no Man, that is, conſidered disjunctively and alone; when yet that ſingle Perſon ſtanding in a proper place of Service in the Body, may by his Prudence and Courage, ſignify very much to the Publick Weal of his Country; as *Fabius* did to the *Roman* State, of whom the Poet truly obſerved,

Unus homo nobis cunctando reſtituit rem.

That one Man by his prudent Delay and Conduct hath ſaved the whole Commonwealth.

SECT. II.

'Tis therefore the undoubted Interest of Christian States and Churches, to make every individual Person as useful as may be to the whole, and to enjoy the Services of all their Subjects and Members, one way or other, according to their different Capacities, that it may be said of them (as the Historian speaks of the Land of *Canaan*) that there was in it, *Nihil infructuosum, nihil sterile*; not a shrub but bare some Fruit.

No prudent Kingdom or Church, will deprive themselves of the benefits they may enjoy by the Services of any considerable Number of Men (especially if they be able and good Men) without a plain inevitable necessity. No Man without such a necessity will part with the Use and Service of the least Finger or Toe, much less with a Leg or Arm; but would reckon himself half undone, if a *Paralytick* Disease should strike one half of the Body, and render it utterly useless to defend and succor the other Part in time of danger.

SECT. III.

Much so stands the Case with Churches and Kingdoms, when the causeless and cruel Enmity of one part, prevails so far against the other, as to deprive that State or Church of the Use and Service of Multitudes of good and faithful Members.

It is Folly in its highest exaltation, for one part of a Nation, out of bitter Enmity to the other,

other, not only to ſeek all ways and means to ſuppreſs and ruin it, whilſt a common Danger hangs over the whole; but to rejoyce in the Miſeries of their Brethren, as the principal thing which they fancy would contribute to the great Advantage of their Cauſe. What but a general Puniſhment (if that will do it) can work Mens hearts into a more general Compaſſion?

The Hiſtories of thoſe times ſufficiently inform us, That the great Feuds and Factions in the *Weſtern* Church, not only immediately preceded, but opened the way to the terrible Inundations of the *Goths* and *Vandals*. Whilſt the ſuffering Part cries out, *Cruelty, Cruelty*; thoſe that inflict it cry, as loud, *Juſtice, Juſtice*. Whatever rational Apologies or Methods of Peace come from the oppreſſed Party, are cenſured by the other as Murmur and Mutiny. All Men commend Unity, and aſſert it to be the Intereſt of Kingdoms and Churches. They wiſh all Men were of one Mind, but what Mind muſt that be? To be ſure, none but their own.

The more cool, prudent, and moderate Spirits of each Party, may ſtrive to the uttermoſt to allay theſe unnatural Feuds and Animoſities. The Wiſdom of the governing-part may take the Inſtruments of Cruelty out of their hand; but 'tis God alone that can pluck up the roots of Enmity out of their hearts.

And what is the matter, when all is ſifted and examined? Why, the matter is this; ſome will be more ſerious, ſtrict, and conſcientious, than others think fit or neceſſary for them to be. They dare not Curſe, Swear, Whore, and be Drunk,

as others do. They ſcruple to comply with what God hath not commanded, and the very Impoſers confeſs to be indifferent antecedently to their Command. They reverently mention the Name of God without an Oath, and the ſolemn Matters of Religion, without a Jeſt in their Company. They will aſſume as much Liberty to reprove Sin, as others do to commit it. They take more pleaſure in heavenly Duties and holy Conferences, than in Ranting and Roaring in Taverns and Alehouſes. That is, in a word, they live up to the Principles of Religion, which all pretend to; and this is their unpardonable Crime, a fault never to be expiated by any leſs puniſhment than their deſtruction.

And are not People (think you) come to a fine paſs, when the ſtricteſt Obedience to the Laws of God ſhall be accounted more criminal, than the moſt open and profane Violation of them? Nay, tho they reprove the other Parties Sins no other way, but by their more ſerious and religious Lives; yet this alone ſhall be ſufficient to make them culpable and obnoxious.

SECT. IV.

If the Party thus generally hated and maligned, be (for the generality of them) ſerious and godly Chriſtians; or if the ſtrictneſs and holineſs of their Lives, and tenderneſs of their Conſciences be the true Ground and Reaſon of our hatred of them; ſuch an hatred, when it becomes general, is a direful preſage of ſome common Calamity and Miſery haſtning upon ſuch a People, Hoſ. 9. 7. *The days of viſitation are come, the days*

days of recompence are come, Iſrael ſhall know it; the Prophet is a fool, the ſpiritual man is mad; for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred.

And our own Reaſon will give us this Concluſion, as well as Scripture. For whatſoever brings Sin to its full maturity, muſt needs haſten Judgments. And what can heighten and accent the Sins of a People more than ſuch a cruel hatred of good Men upon the ſcore and account before given? All hatred of Godlineſs hath a tang of Deviliſhneſs. 'Tis a deſperate flying in the very Face of God, whoſe Image Holineſs is. Sin can ſcarce be graduated a peg higher.

Reaſon tells the Husbandman, 'tis time to Mow and Reap his Corn when it is full Ripe. And it may convince you, that God's time of reaping down a ſinful People is near, when their Sins are grown to ſuch full maturity as this. *Put ye in the ſickle, for the harveſt is ripe; come, get ye down, for the preſs is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedneſs is great*, Joel 3. 13.

SECT. V.

The true Cauſe and Riſe of this great and fixed Hatred amongſt profeſſed Chriſtians (whatever may be pretended to ſalve Reputation) is the Contrariety and Repugnancy of the Natures and Principles by which the Godly and Ungodly are governed. There is an Enmity betwixt the two Seeds, *Gen.* 3. 15. And this Enmity runs down in a Blood, more or leſs in all Ages and Places, *Gal.* 4 29. *As then, he that was born after*

the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is now. So it was, and so it is, and so it will be, till Conversion changeth the heart and principle. This Enmity cannot die, whilst Satan lives, and rules in the hearts of Children of Disobedience.

And the Enmity is mutual. *An unjust man is an abomination to the just; and he that is upright in the way, is an abomination to the wicked,* Prov. 29. 27. Only with this difference; The good Man hates, *Non virum, sed vitium*, not the Person, but his Sin. The wicked Man hates both the Person of the Godly, and his Godliness too; yea, the Person for his Godliness sake.

This hatred of the Godly, secretly and habitually lurks in the Nature of a wicked Man, as Rapaciousness doth in a young Wolf that never saw a Lamb. It extends it self universally to the whole Kind, and reaches those, whose lives are most obligingly sweet; yea, those that are bound to them in the strictest Bonds of Nature. As we may see in that most unnatural Instance of *Cain*'s murthering his own Brother *Abel*. It discovers it self in seeking the Destruction of them they hate upon a Religious account, and in rejoycing at any Evil that befals them. Nothing is more grateful to them, than any occasion to disgrace and expose them with contempt to the World.

SECT. VI.

But tho the strictness and holiness of good Men, causing the Consciences of wicked Men privately to condemn, and inwardly to gaul and grate

grate them for their looſneſs and profaneneſs, be the true and real Ground and Cauſe of the Grudge and Hatred; yet they think it fit for Reputation ſake, that this be wholly ſuppreſſed and ſilenced, and ſomething elſe pretended for the Cauſe and Reaſon of it, elſe it would look too like the Devil himſelf. And therefore amongſt other plauſible Pretenſions for their Malignity to thoſe that are better than themſelves, theſe three are principally inſiſted on, and pleaded.

1. That it is not their *Piety*, but their *Hypocriſy* which they hate. Not becauſe they have indeed more Piety than others, but becauſe they make more vain Shew and Oſtentation of it, than themſelves do; who, ſetting aſide their ridiculous *Grimaces*, and affected phantaſtick Words and Actions, are every whit as good as themſelves.

2. Becauſe under a pretence of greater ſtrictneſs in Religion, they do but hatch and carry on Sedition and Rebellion; and that the World will never be quiet, whilſt ſuch Vipers are ſuffered in the Bowels of it.

3. That both the former have been made ſufficiently evident and apparent in ſeveral former, and more recent Inſtances of the Hypocriſy and ſeditious Deſigns of as high Pretenders to Religion and Reformation, as thoſe are, whom they truly hate, and would not ſuffer them to live, if their Power were anſwerable to their Hatred.

As to this firſt Plea, *viz.* Their Hypocriſy, 'twill quickly be found to be too thin and weak,

to endure the Teſt of your own Reaſon and Conſciences. For how will you anſwer them, when they ſhall thus argue and expoſtulate the matter with you?

You that thus Cenſure, and thoſe that are cenſured for Hypocriſy by you, do both profeſs one and the ſame Religion. Your profane Lives are notoriouſly contrary to all the Principles of this Religion. You Swear, Drink, Whore, Revile, and Perſecute the others, only becauſe you fancy their Tones, Geſtures, *&c.* to be ſome way or other indecent. You cannot deny, but they live Soberly and Godly. They attend upon all the Duties of Religion ſtrictly and conſcientiouſly. Your Malice againſt them can find nothing to carp at, but ſome little Trifles, with which the Eſſence of Religion is not concerned. Did they run into the ſame exceſs of riot with you, greater matters than theſe would be over-looked, yea, and applauded too.

Now let Reaſon and Conſcience ſay, who is moſt likely to be the Hypocrite, the Man that calls himſelf a Chriſtian, and under that Profeſſion wallows in all profaneneſs, not once cenſuring himſelf for it; or he that lives Soberly and Godly, againſt whom Malice it ſelf can produce nothing but ſuch inconſiderable Trifles as theſe? Is not this the very Caſe which Chriſt hath determined to our hands, and made ſuch Cenſurers the Hypocrites, *Matth.* 7. 3. *And why beholdeſt thou the mote that is in thy Brothers eye, but conſidereſt not the beam that is in thine own eye?* It was but one blemiſh, and that a very ſmall one too, but a *Mote*; however this you can quickly ſpy, and as raſhly cenſure. But mean while there's a

Beam,

Beam, an horrid flagitious wickedneſs in your ſelves; but 'tis too near your own Eyes to be diſcerned by you. Which of theſe two (think you) is the Hypocrite?

2. But what if this *Mote* that you diſcern, be but a fancy, a meer imagination of your own, how will that aggravate your Sin, and evince both your Malice and Hypocriſy together? You ſay their Tones and Geſtures in Religious Duties are Ridiculous and Scenical. This you take up lightly againſt ſome few of them, and as unjuſtly apply unto the aſperſing of the whole Party, which your own Reaſon muſt and will immediately condemn. For there are multitudes of that Party, whoſe Countenances, Tones, and Geſtures, are as decorous, grave, and becoming the preſence of that God with whom they they have to do, as any Men in the World.

3. And as for thoſe few whom you thus blemiſh for their indecent Tones or Geſtures; what if thoſe Tones you ſpeak of, amount to no more, but natural Defects, and unavoidable Infirmities, which they would, but cannot help? Do they for this, and no worſe than this, deſerve to be cenſured and condemned for Hypocrites? Or, what if they be inſenſible Actions, occaſioned by the greater Intention of their Spirits in the Service of God? May not thoſe very things which you profanely flout, cenſure, and ſcoff at, either not all be noted as blemiſhes to their Devotion by the Eye of God, or noted with Approbation and Delight, as the effects of ſpiritual fervency in his Service? Certainly, Gentlemen, you are no good Marks-men, that neither draw the right Arrow, nor level at the true mark.

4. And were not this a vain and empty Pretence to cover your own Malice againſt Godlineſs; how comes it to paſs that more Scenical Habits, Words, and Geſtures, ſhould paſs as Ornaments in others, whom you affect? Whether this be not partiality unworthy of a Man, let Reaſon and Conſcience freely judge.

In a word, What Commiſſion or Authority, can you produce thus to aſcend the Throne of God, and draw your bittereſt Cenſures through the very Hearts of Gods People for ſuch pitiful Trifles as theſe; firſt condemning them as Hypocrites, which is a moſt unwarrantable Preſumption; and then perſecute them as far as you can for their preſumed Hypocriſy? Have a care what you do; be not Mockers, leſt your Bonds be made ſtrong. This is a Sin which haſtens National Deſolation, 2 Chr. 36. 16, 17. *They mocked the meſſengers of God, and deſpiſed his Word, and miſuſed his Prophets, until the wrath of the Lord aroſe againſt his People, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the King of the Chaldees, who ſlew their young Men with the Sword,* &c.

Plea II.

You ſay, *'Tis not Godlineſs you hate, and would perſecute; but they are a ſort of Perſons, who under a pretence of Zeal for Religion and Reformation, deſign nothing elſe but Sedition and Rebellion; that the Nation will never be quiet, whilſt ſuch Vipers are ſuffered to live in it; and to fortify this Plea, you add, that both their Hypocriſy and Sedition have been made ſufficiently evident to the World in many inſtances.*

Zeal

Zeal for the Laws, and Security of the Government, if rightly tempered and qualified, is highly commendable; and wherever Sincerity animates, and Prudence governs it, it ought by no means to be diſcouraged. But there are too many Grounds and Cauſes of Suſpition, that both theſe will be found wholly wanting, or extreamly defective in many high Pretenders to it, when it comes to be ſifted to its bottom Principles, and weighed in the juſt Ballance of ſound Reaſon.

For if you be inflamed with a pure Zeal for the Laws and Government you live under, then you will find your ſelves obliged for your own Vindication to ſatisfie the juſt Expectation of your own, and other mens Reaſons and Conſciences in the following Particulars.

Expectation I.

Firſt, Reaſon and Conſcience in your ſelves and others, will expect it from you, that you of all Men living ſhould be moſt preciſely and punctually Obedient to all thoſe juſt and good Laws you live under, ſince your Zeal burns ſo hot againſt thoſe that comply not punctually with them. For thoſe that make ſo much Conſcience (as you ſeem to do) of other Mens Offences againſt the Laws, muſt be preſumed (if your Profeſſion be ſincere) to make at leaſt as much Conſcience of breaking any of them in your own Perſons; elſe neither Reaſon nor Conſcience will ever admit this Plea of yours for ſound and good.

Now

Now the Laws ſometimes appoint Puniſhments for Non-conformity to the Rites and Ceremonies, affixed to the publick National Worſhip; and ſo they do always for convicted Swearing, Drunkenneſs, and Adultery. All theſe Laws have the very ſame Sanction by the Authority we live under. They forbid, and puniſh the one as well as the other. And if there be any difference, it lies in this, that theſe latter are expreſly forbidden and threatned by God, antecedently to the Magiſtrate's Prohibition of them, which hath no ſmall weight in the matter under conſideration.

Now if any Man ſhall pretend Zeal and Conſcience againſt diſſent in Judgment or Practice from the Church, but makes no Conſcience at all to Curſe and Swear, be Drunk or Unclean; he will find it a difficult task to perſwade his own, or other mens Reaſons or Conſciences, that this his Zeal for the Laws and Government, is ſincere and pure. For were it ſo, it could never allow him to live in the notorious Violation of the Laws himſelf, which he is ſo fierce and bitter againſt others for.

Expoſtulation II.

Secondly, If your Zeal be ſincere, it will contain it ſelf within the Bounds and Limits of the Offence, and not lay hold upon the Innocent, as well as upon the Guilty, and make you hate and perſecute them that were never Turbulent and Seditious, equally with the greateſt Criminals. If you will hug this Principle, as things ſtand now, Reaſon will tell you, 'tis as juſt at all other times, as it is at this.

Would

Would you not think it an unreaſonable and moſt injurious thing to be plucked out of your Shops, or Houſes, and hurried away to the Goal, becauſe two or three diſſolute Fellows in the City or Town where you live, have been Riotous or Seditious, tho you poſſibly know not the Men, nor can be ſo much as juſtly ſuſpected of any Confederacy with them? True Zeal for the Laws and Government is content to wait, and ſuſpend its Revenges, till a fair Conviction have paſſed upon the Guilty. And when it falls upon them, 'tis careful that it touch none beſides them; but ſuffers a Man to retain in the very height of it, due Love and Honour for all that are Innocent.

If Chriſtians be firſt denominated by general Titles and Terms of diſtinction, which they cannot help, and then the Crimes of any particular Perſon, that the World pleaſes to denominate as one of the ſame Party, muſt be charged and imputed to the whole; what muſt the conſequence of this be, but that the whole Community become obnoxious to Puniſhment, and the very Government it ſelf thereupon be diſſolved?

For I take it to be paſt denial or doubt, that ſome of each Denomination have been, are, or may be guilty of ſeditious Practices. Some Hypocrites will lurk among thoſe vaſt Bodies of People under the moſt ſtrict and watchful Government; but God forbid their guilt ſhould affect the whole Body, under whoſe Name they ſhelter themſelves. God, Reaſon, and Conſcience do all command the hotteſt Zeal to make

its Pause and just Distinction here. Let the Guilty be brought to Condign Punishment upon fair Tryal and Conviction. This Discourse designs no Favour for such. But let not those who abhor their Wickedness, and are as pure from their Crimes as your selves, suffer with them, or for them. For then your Reason will tell you, your selves are as liable to sufferings as they, and that your Zeal is not kindled by love to Justice, but the hatred of a Party.

It is not in the Body Politick, as in the Body Natural. If the hand Steal, the feet are justly laid in Irons, and the Neck put into an Halter; because all the Members of the Body Natural are animated and governed but by one Soul. But in the Body Politick every Individual hath a distinct Soul of his own, and therefore that Member only that offends, ought to be punished, and all the rest to enjoy their full Liberty and Honour as before. Away therefore for ever with this Church and State-destroying *Synecdoche*.

Expectation III.

Thirdly, If there be a change made upon the Laws, and they shall at any time tolerate and protect that Party and Practice which once they made Criminal; then your Reason, and every Mans else will expect from you (if your Zeal for the Laws and Government be sincere and unfeigned) that your Countenance and Carriage to that People be changed and altered, according to the different aspect of the Laws and Government

vernment upon them: That your Envy and Hatred ceaſe with the offence, and that you be as ready to aſſiſt and encourage them, when they act according to Law, as you formerly were to afflict and proſecute them for acting contrary to Law; elſe, pretend what you will, 'tis plain enough, that it was not Zeal for the Laws and Government, but ſomewhat elſe (which every Body may gueſs at) that inflamed your Rage againſt them.

For whenſoever the Wiſdom of the Government finds it neceſſary by Toleration to take away the Crime and Offence, it muſt neceſſarily take away this very Plea for Hatred and Perſecution with it. Otherwiſe it would be all one to act for Law, and againſt Law; to puniſh them that are Offenders, and them that offend no more than your ſelves; to turn the Edg of your Rage and Fury againſt thoſe that undermine the Government, and thoſe that are as Zealous as your ſelves to ſupport and defend it by their Perſons and Purſes.

Expectation IV.

Fourthly, Your Reaſon will juſtly expect it from you, that when or whereſoever you ſhall ſee eminent Piety meeting with punctual Conformity in one Man, that Man ſhall be your very Darling, and that both theſe Qualifications ſhould recommend him to your deareſt Affection. The more ſtrictly godly he is, the more conformable he is to the Laws of God; as well as by his punctual Compliance with enjoyned Rules and Rites of Worſhip to the Laws of Men.

Men. If he be a Man of Catholick Charity to all of every Perſwaſion, whom he judges to fear God, and be truly conſcientious; if he boldly and impartially reprove Sin wherever he finds it, tho it be in his own Patron, or Men of his own Profeſſion; you will ſtill love him the more for that. For if Sincerity and Conformity (as you pretend) be the very things which you make ſuch a Noiſe and Buſſle for in the World, here you have them both in conjunction. This is the Man you ſeem to ſeek (by theſe Pleas of yours) for a Pattern and Standard to reduce other Men to.

And is it really ſo, Gentlemen, with you? Do you heartily affect and prize a ſtrict and ſerious Conformiſt, that fears not to expoſe the odious Shamefulneſs and Wickedneſs of profane Swearing, Curſing, Drunkenneſs, and Uncleanneſs, without reſpect of Perſons, both in his Pulpit and private Converſes? Do you love him the better for his plain dealing with your Conſciences, in detecting the grand Cheat of Formality in Religion; for his cloſe cutting Convictions of the inſufficiency of meer Civility to your Salvation, and the indiſpenſable neceſſity of Regeneration? Do you heartily Love and Honour him for thundering you out of Ale-houſes and Taverns, unto your Family and Cloſet-duties? "For telling you plainly, "your Love muſt not be confined to your "own Party, but extended to all that fear "God, however they be externally diſtinguiſh-"ed among Men? Nay, for convincing you "plainly, that Religion lies not in external

"Modes

" Modes and Rites, in Standing, Kneeling, or " Reſponſes? That the Name and Cry of *the* " *Church, the Church*, will as little avail to your " Salvation, as the cry of the Superſtitious and " Profane *Jews, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple* " *of the Lord are theſe?* That true Religion is an " inward, ſerious, ſpiritual thing, conſiſting in, " and evidencing it ſelf by the Mortification of " your Sins, and real devotedneſs of your Hearts " to the Lord?

If ſuch a Man as this will pleaſe, and delight your very hearts; then my Reaſon is bound to conclude, there may be reality in what you pretend. But if you ſhall hate and loath ſuch a Man as this, equally with a profeſſed Diſſenter, you muſt excuſe me, and all the Rational World with me, if we ſhall conclude, that it is not true Zeal for the Laws, for the Church, or for the ſincerity and peaceable Lives of its Profeſſors, but an inward, rooted Enmity at Religion it ſelf, that ſets you on work under the feigned pretences of other things.

Expectation V.

Fifthly, Your Re[illegible]n will expect and exact it from you, that whenſoever you ſhall be convinced that all theſe Stirs and Buſſles that have been in the World, all this Fining, Impriſoning, and Impoveriſhing your Proteſtant Brethren and Neighbours for their Conſcience-ſake, hath done the Church no good, but given a great and real Advantage to our common Enemy to ruin us together; that we may diſtinguiſh our ſelves how

how we pleaſe in our *Folly*, but they will never diſtinguiſh us in their *Fury*; for we are all known to them by one common Name of *Hereticks*.

In this Caſe, your Reaſon exacts it from you, and ſo doth the common Reaſon of Mankind, that a Senſe of common Intereſt, and common Danger, now quiet thoſe Feuds, and extinguiſh thoſe Fires, which our own Luſts firſt kindled, and the Devil and our common Enemies have incenſed, to the great Damage and Hazard of the whole Proteſtant Cauſe.

Such a ſeaſonable and becoming Senſe as this, were in it ſelf ſufficient to cool a wiſe Mans heats, if Penal Laws were left ſtanding in their full force and vigour; but when the Wiſdom and Reaſon of the State ſhall plainly diſcern both the Uſefulneſs and Neceſſity of Liberty, and thereupon take away (as they have now moſt prudently and ſeaſonably done) the further occaſions of miſchief to the whole, by relaxing the Yoke that bound ſome (and thoſe a very great Body of truly Loyal and Uſeful Subjects) leaving the reſt in the quiet Poſſeſſion of their own Liberties and Properties; what ſhall we call that Fire, which ſtill continues burning and encreaſing, not only after, but by all this, but an unquenchable Hell-fire?

If *Chimæra's*, and ſelf-created Jealouſies, That ſome carnal Intereſts of ours are not ſo well ſecured to us under Liberty, as they were under Perſecution and Tyranny; this were the right way to perpetuate Diſſentions and Perſecutions to the end of the World.

And

And now, Gentlemen, I hope I may ſay, without being vain or opinionative, that your own Reaſon hath fairly diſarmed you of theſe Pleas and Excuſes, by which you have hitherto defended your ſelves in your moſt ſinful Practices of profane *Curſing*, and *Swearing*, *Drunkenneſs*, *Uncleanneſs*, and bitter *Enmity* againſt your Proteſtant Brethren for things that touch not the Eſſence of Chriſtianity.

And believe it, Sirs, it is truly Genteel and Glorious, to ſuffer your ſelves to be ſubdued and conquered by the plain Convictions of your own Reaſon and Conſcience. 'Tis ten thouſand times more Honourable and Glorious to lay down your Arms at the feet of theſe, than to lay down both Reaſon and Conſcience at the feet of Satan and your Luſts, and continue fighting obſtinately againſt God, your own Souls, Bodies, Eſtates, Reputations; yea, your very Reaſons and Conſciences, your Innocent Brethren, and the Peace of Church and State, under Satan's Banner.

In all this Diſcourſe, I have not deſigned to exaſperate, but aſſwage and reſtrain your Luſts and Paſſions, by laying the loving and gentle hands of your own Reaſons and Conſciences upon them. I have not given the leaſt Injurious touch to your Honour, but all along pleaded for the Recovery, or Security of it. I have expoſed no Man by any particular Mark or Indigitation.

But now I have done with you; if your own Conſciences ſhall begin to make a rounder and more particular Application of theſe general Reaſon-

Reaſonings and Arguments, and ſay to you, as *Nathan* to *David*, *Thou art the Man*, I am not accountable for that. But be confident of it, you are accountable to God for all thoſe plain Convictions and faithful Endeavours uſed with you, and tryed upon you, to ſave you from all thoſe Miſeries your head-ſtrong Luſts with furious Precipitation are manifeſtly running you into.

If you can ſubſtantially and ſolidly refel thoſe Arguments againſt, and vindicate thoſe Pleas for Sin, which Reaſon and Conſcience have urged and cenſured above; and can produce ſtronger and clearer Arguments to defend and juſtify the Courſes here cenſured and condemned: Or if you can obtain a Writ of Error to remove theſe Cauſes to another lawful Court of Judicature, where you ſhall obtain a more favourable Verdict, your complaint of ſevere Dealing with you here, will not want ſome Ground or Colour: But if you cannot (as you know you cannot) then never blame your own Reaſons, nor mine, for dealing Rigorouſly or Injuriouſly with you.

I am willing to hope, and perſwade my ſelf, that I ſhall at leaſt obtain a Reformation of Life from many of you. I have tugg'd hard for it with you here. I will tug harder with God in Prayer to obtain it for you. But yet, Gentlemen, I muſt tell you in the cloſe, That tho an external Reformation of theſe Evil Courſes may make your Lives more healthy, happy, and durable in this World, and will greatly conduce to the publick, as well as your perſonal and private Intereſt; yet if you expect compleat and perfect

Happineſs

Happineſs in the World to come, you muſt advance one ſtep further beyond Reformation, unto ſound *Converſion*. The firſt makes you *comparatively* happy here; but the ſecond will make you *perfectly* happy and bleſſed for ever hereafter. The firſt frees you from many *temporal* Miſeries upon Earth; but the ſecond from *eternal* Miſeries in Hell. And this brings you to the other bleſſed Step, by Converſion, which is the Second Part.

THE

The Second Part:

Evincing the

POSSIBILITY, NECESSITY,

AND

EXCELLENCY

OF

Converſion to God,

The only Thing that makes Men truly happy, and perfectly bleſſed in the World to come.

By the ſame Author.

Iſa. 55. 7, 8. *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, ſaith the Lord.*

Iſa 1. 18. *Come now, and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord; though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow; tho they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool.*

1 Cor. 6. 11. *And ſuch were ſome of you; but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified,* &c.

LONDON:

Printed for *Thomas Cockeril*, at the *Three Legs* in the *Poultrey*, over againſt the *Stocks-Market*. 1691.

THE Poſſibility, Nature and Neceſſity OF CONVERSION, Opened and Evinced.

SECT. I.

Conviction ſuppoſed, and Grace admired.

REaſon and *Conſcience* have been ſhaming men out of their Prophaneneſs, in the former Part of this Diſcourſe. *Free-grace* invites them to the Life of Holineſs, and thereby to the Life of Bleſſedneſs in this *Second Part*.

There you ſee what it is to live like *Beaſts*. *Here* you may ſee what it is to live like *Chriſtians*.

My Charity commands me to ſuppoſe, that ſome Readers ſtand by this time convicted in their own Conſciences, both of the extream wickedneſs, and the immediate danger of that prophane Courſe they have heitherto purſued, and perſiſted in. And that by this time they begin to interrogate them in the Apoſtle's cloſe and cutting Language, *Rom.* 6. 21. *What fruit had ye then in*

thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed? For the end of thoſe things is death. 'Tis hard to imagine, that ſo many cloſe Debates and Reaſonings as you have heard in the former Part, ſhould not leave many of you under conviction and trouble of Spirit. You ſee your own Reaſons and Conſciences have condemned you; *And if our heart condemn us* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things*, 1 John 3. 20. 'Tis folly to imagine, you ſhall be acquitted at God's immediate Bar, who are already caſt and condemned at your own Privy Seſſions.

If this be the happy effect (as I hope it is) of all the former cloſe and ſolemn Debates with your Conſciences, it will naturally and immediately caſt thy Soul, Reader, into great admiration of, and aſtoniſhment at the patience and long-ſuffering of God, that hath born with thee, under a life of prodigious and reiterated provocations until this day. And his Goodneſs will be as admirable to thee, as his Patience; in that he hath not only ſuffered thee to live till this day, but made it the day of thy Converſion, the firſt neceſſary ſtep towards thy Converſion: and the very firſt things he entertains thy convinced and troubled Soul with, to be the poſſibility and probability of thy Converſion to God.

The greatneſs of his Patience ſhews his Almighty Power, *Rom.* 9. 22. *Nahum* 1. 3. But his willingneſs to paſs by all the wrongs you have done him, and to be at peace with you, diſcovers the immenſe riches of his grace, *Tit.* 3. 3, 4.

That God ſhould be ſo quick in the executions of his wrath upon your Companions in ſin, and ſo patient and long-ſuffering towards you, that have

have out-ſinned them all, is ſuch a comparative conſideration of his bounty, as ſhould even overwhelm the man that beholds it, *Rom.* 11. 22. *Behold the goodneſs and ſeverity of God! on them that fell, ſeverity; but towards thee goodneſs.*

If thou be that very man, who in the paſt courſe of thy Life, haſt been a prophane Swearer, a beaſtly Drunkard, a laſcivious perſon, an hater and perſecutor of good men; and after all this, the Lord hath brought an offer of mercy to thy Soul, and ſhall convince thee it is not come too late, but that the Door of Hope ſtands yet open to thee; my advice to thee is, That thou caſt thy ſelf down at the feet of mercy, and after this manner pour forth thy laments and deſires before the Lord.

"And is there yet a poſſibility of mercy, O "Lord God, for ſuch a vile wretch as I have been! "Can the arms of Free-grace yet open themſelves "to embrace ſuch a Monſter of wickedneſs as I "am! Who then is a God like unto thee! and "what patience, mercy and goodneſs is like thine! "I have far exceeded others in ſin; I have lived "the Life of a Beaſt, yea, of a Devil. I have dar"ed thy dreadful and glorious Name with thou"ſands of horrid Blaſphemies, trampled all thy "glorious Attributes under my feet; challenged "thee to thy very face to do thy worſt, even to "damn me to the pit of Hell; I have yielded up "this Soul with all its noble Faculties and Pow"ers, as inſtruments of ſin unto the Devil; and "made this Body which ſhould have been the hal"lowed Temple of thy Spirit, to be the noyſom "Sink or Common-Shore for all unclean and "abominable Luſts to run and ſettle in. I have

" hated, reviled and persecuted those that were
" more strictly sober and godly than my self, be-
" cause their convincing-examples disquieted,
" checked and convicted my Conscience in the
" eager pursuit of my Lusts and Pleasures.

" I have lived in the prophane neglect of Pray-
" er, Meditation, Self-reflection, and all other
" spiritual Christian Duties, thinking to make an
" atonement for all, by a few hypocritical ex-
" ternal Formalities.

" To accommodate my carnal interest in the
" world, I have come reeking hot out of an Ale-
" House, or Whore-House, to the Table of the
" Lord, where with unhallowed hands, and a
" more unhallowed heart, I have crucified again
" the Lord of Glory; and given the vilest affront
" and despight to that most sacred and precious
" blood, which now must save me, or I am lost
" for ever. Thus have I done; and because
" thou kept silent, I thought thee to be altoge-
" ther such an one as my self. But this day hast
" thou reproved me, and set mine abominations in
" order before me.

" I have tempted and induced many others
" into the same Impieties with me, of whom
" some are already gone down to the dead; and
" others so fixed, and fully engaged in the pursuit
" of their Lusts, that there appear no signs of re-
" pentance or recovery in them.

" Thy wrath, Lord, soon brake forth against
" the Angels that sinned in Heaven; yet hither-
" to hast thou forborn and spared me, who have
" been highly provoking thee, ever since I was
" born, by a life of unparallell'd wickedness up-
" on Earth. Vile wretch that I am! I have despi-

" sed

" ſed the riches of thy goodneſs, forbearance,
" and long-ſuffering, not knowing that the good-
" neſs of God leadeth me to repentance. And af-
" ter all, here I am told, that there is yet a poſſi-
" bility of pardon, mercy and ſalvation for me.
" The news is ſo great and ſo good, that I am zea-
" louſly concerned to examine the grounds and
" evidences of it. And if it ſhall appear to be as
" true, as it is aſtoniſhingly ſtrange and raviſhing-
" ly ſweet, I hope it ſhall effectually lead me to
" repentance, and diſſolve for ever the ſtrongeſt
" tyes betwixt me and my luſts.

SECT. II.

Converſion of the vileſt Sinner poſſible.

THAT it is poſſible for the greateſt and moſt infamous Sinner to be recovered by Repentance and Converſion, and thereupon to find mercy and forgiveneſs with God, is a truth as ſure and firm, as it is ſweet and comfortable. Three things will give full evidence of it.

1. That their Sins do not exceed the power and ſufficiency of the cauſes of Remiſſion.

2. That ſuch Sinners are within the calls and invitations of the Goſpel.

3. That ſuch Sinners are found among the inſtances and Examples of pardoning mercy, recorded in the Scriptures.

And if the Cauſes of Pardon be ſufficient, and able to produce it; if the Goſpel-invitations do take them in; and ſuch ſinners as theſe, every way as vile and wicked, have not been ſhut out, but

received to mercy; then 'tis beyond all doubt that there is (at least) a possibility of mercy for such sinners as you are.

I. 'Tis past all rational doubt, that the Causes of Remission are every way sufficient and able to produce the forgiveness of such sins as yours are. For consider with your selves,

The power of { 1. The *Impulsive* Cause. 2. The *Meritorious* Cause. 3. The *Applying* Cause.

1. The sufficiency and ability of the *Impulsive Cause* of Pardon, which is none other but the *Free-grace* of God, the immense riches and treasures whereof, do infinitely exceed the accompts and computations both of Angels and Men, *Exod.* 34. 6, 7. *And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin.* Mic. 7. 18, 19. *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy: He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us, he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the Sea.* Once more, Rom. 5. 20. *Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.* So that whatever thy sins have been, they do not, they cannot exceed the ability and power of the Grace of God, the all-sufficient *Impulsive Cause* of Remission. That infinite *Abyss* or Sea of mercy can swallow up and cover such

ſuch mountains of guilt as thine have been.

2. Nor do thy ſins exceed the power and ability of the *Meritorious Cauſe* of Remiſſion, namely, *the Blood of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; for that Blood is the Blood of God, *Act.* 20. 28. He is the Lamb of God, whoſe blood is ſufficient to take away the ſins of the world, *John* 1. 29. There is but one ſin in the world exempt from Remiſſion by this blood; and if thy heart be now wounded with the ſenſe of ſin (as I here ſuppoſe it to be) that's none of thy ſin, how heinous ſoever thy other ſins be.

3. Nor do thy ſins exceed the ability and power of the *Applying Cauſe* of pardon, namely, *the Spirit of God.* For though I ſhould ſuppoſe thy *mind* to be clouded and overſhadowed with groſſeſt ignorance, thy *Heart* to be as hard as an *Adamant* or *Nether Mill-ſtone*, thy *Will* ſtiff and obſtinate, thy *Affections* enchanted and bewitched with the pleaſures of Sin; yet this Spirit of God in a moment can make a convincing beam of light to dart into thy dark *mind*, make thy hard *heart* relent, thy ſtubborn *will* to bow, and all the *affections* of thy Soul to comply, and open obediently to Chriſt, *John* 16. 9, 10. *The Spirit, when he cometh, he ſhall convince the world of Sin*, &c.

Thus you ſee whatever your guilt be, it does not exceed the abilities of the *Cauſes* of Remiſſion. Oh what an Encouragement is this!

II. And there is yet further Encouragement in this, that if you will open your *Bibles*, you may find your ſelves within the Calls and Invitations of the Goſpel. And no man can ſay that man is without hope, that is within a Goſpel-invitation.

on. Conſider *Iſa.* 55: 7, 8. *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon: for my thoughts are not your thoughts*, &c. Here you have the nature of Converſion deſcribed *Negatively* and *Poſitively*, by forſaking your ways and thoughts, and turning to the Lord, The *way* notes the external courſe of the Converſation; the *thoughts* denote the internal frame and temper of the Mind; both theſe muſt be forſaken. And *turning to the Lord*, denotes the ſincere dedication of the whole man to God; all which is poſſible and eaſy for the Spirit of God to do; and this being once done, abundant Pardon is aſſured. If you ſay you cannot think it; God tells you in the very next words, That his thoughts are not your thoughts, but as far above them as the Heavens are higher than the Earth. Read to the ſame purpoſe, *Iſaiah* 1. 18, *Rev.* 3. 20. *John* 7. 37.

III. And to make the poſſibility of Remiſſion yet clearer, know for your encouragement, that as vile, infamous, and prodigious Sinners as your ſelves, are recorded and found amongſt the inſtances and examples of forgiven ſinners in Scripture. *Paul* was once a fierce and cruel Perſecutor and Blaſphemer, yet he obtained mercy, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13, 14. That ſinful *Woman* recorded *Luke* 7. 37, 38, was an infamous and a notorious ſinner, yet her ſins, which were many, were forgiven her, *v.* 47. *Manaſſeh* was a Monſter of wickedneſs, as you may read, 2 *Chron.* 33. yet found mercy. And if you view that Catalogue of ſinners given in

1 *Cor.*

1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. you will ſeem to find among them the very forlorn-hope of deſperate ſinners, advanced neareſt to Hell of any men upon Earth; yet ſee *ver.* 11. what is ſaid of ſome of them: *And ſuch were ſome of you; but ye are waſhed, but ye are juſtified.*

All theſe things plainly ſhew (I ſay not the *Certainty* that you *ſhall* be, but) the *Poſſibility* that you *may* be pardoned; which is a mercy and encouragement unſpeakable.

SECT. III.

The Converſion of prophane ones highly probable.

AND becauſe Satan labours to diſcourage them that are gone in ſin ſo far as you are, by cutting off all hopes of mercy from them, and bringing them to this deſperate Concluſion, Damned we know we ſhall and muſt be, and therefore as good be damned for more, as leſs. If we had lived ſober and civil lives, we might have had ſome hope; but becauſe we have no hope, 'tis as good for us to take our full ſwinge in ſin, as to think of returning by Repentance and Converſion, ſo late in the day as this is.

To obviate this deadly ſnare of Satan, I ſhall here further add, That there is not only a *Poſſibility* of your recovery, but in ſome reſpect a ſtronger *Poſſibility*, that ſuch as you may be converted and ſaved, than there is for thoſe that have led a ſmoother and more civil life in the world, and wholly truſt to their own Civility for their ſalva-

tion, inſtead of the imputed righteouſneſs of Chriſt.

This plainly appears by that convictive Expreſſion of Chriſt to the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, *Mat.* 21. 31. *Verily I ſay unto you, That the Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of Heaven before you. Publicans*, the moſt infamous among men, and *Harlots* the worſt of women; yet theſe are ſooner wrought over to Chriſt by Faith and Repentance, than the more civil and ſelf-righteous *Scribes* and *Phariſees*.

And indeed 'tis far eaſier to come at the Conſciences of ſuch ſinners by Conviction, than at the others. They have nothing to ward off the ſtroke of conviction: It muſt fall directly and immediately upon their Conſciences. The moſt ſmooth and civil part of the world truſt to their own righteouſneſs, and this ſelf-confidence, like *Armour of proof*, reſiſts all attempts to bring them to Chriſt for righteouſneſs. Nothing fixes men in a ſtate of evil more, than a ſtrong conceit that their Condition is good.

But ſuch as you are, whoſe whole lives have been polluted with prophaneneſs and all impiety, your Conſciences will more eaſily receive convictions of your preſent danger, and of the neceſſity of a ſpeedy and thorow change. You cannot think as others do, that you need no Repentance or Reformation. In this reſpect, therefore, you lie nearer the Door of Hope and Mercy, than other Sinners do.

If therefore it ſhall pleaſe the Lord (whoſe grace is rich and free to the vileſt of ſinners) to pluck out ſuch as you, as brands out of the burning, by thorough converſion to Chriſt, you will

not

not only become real Chriſtians (as all true Converts are) but the moſt excellent, uſeful and zealous amongſt all Chriſtians. As you will be moſt eminent Inſtances of his Grace, ſo will you be the moſt eminent Inſtruments for his Glory. As you have gone beyond other ſinners in wickedneſs, ſo you will ſtrive to exceed them all in your love to Chriſt, *Luke* 7. 47. *She loved much, for much was forgiven her.* You'l never think you can do enough for him, who hath done ſuch great things for you.

Who more fierce and vile before Converſion, than *Paul*, who was a Blaſphemer, a Perſecutor and injurious, 1 *Tim.* 1, 13? And who among all the ſervants of Chriſt loved or laboured for him more than he? How did he rather fly, than travel up and down the world, in a flame of Zeal for Chriſt? As you have been *Ring-leaders* in ſin, ſo you will not endure to come behind any in zeal and love to the Lord Jeſus: Yet not thinking this way to make him a requital for the injuries you have done him (that would be the moſt injurious act of all the reſt): But to teſtifie this way the deep ſenſe you have of the riches and tranſcendency of his goodneſs and mercy to you above others.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

Converſion frequently and fatally miſtaken.

BUT here I muſt warn you of ſome common, but moſt dangerous Miſtakes committed in the world with reſpect to Converſion unto God. Except theſe be ſeaſonably prevented or removed, none of you will ever ſtir or move further than you are towards Chriſt. Amongſt others, beware eſpecially of theſe three following fatal Miſtakes. That of

1. Baptiſmal Regeneration.
2. Common Profeſſion of Chriſtianity.
3. Formality in Religious Duties.

1. There is a notion ſpread among men, and almoſt every where obtaining, That the Scriptures mean nothing elſe by *Converſion*, but *to be baptized in our infancy into the viſible Church*; and that this Ordinance having paſt upon them long ago, they are ſufficiently converted already; and that men make but a needleſs ſtir and buſſle in the world about any other or further Converſion.

But, Sirs, I beſeech you conſider how dangerous a thing it is to take your own Shadow for a Bridge, and venturing upon it drown your ſelves. If Baptiſm be Converſion enough, why doth Chriſt ſay, *Mark* 16. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned?* Baptiſm without Faith ſignifies nothing to Salvation; but Faith without Baptiſm

tiſm (where it cannot be had) ſecures Salvation. And why doth the Apoſtle ſay, *Gal.* 6. 15. *Neither Circumciſion nor Uncircumciſion availeth any thing, but a new Creature*? Or what needed Chriſt to have preſſed and inculcated the indiſpenſible neceſſity of Regeneration upon *Nicodemus*, as he doth, *Joh.* 3. 3, 5, 7. who had been many years a circumciſed *Jew*? This your dangerous dependance upon your Baptiſmal Regeneration, is what hath given ſuch deep offence and prejudice to many (though without juſt cauſe) againſt that Ordinance. I lament it as much as they, that men ſhould turn it into ſuch a deadly ſnare to their own Souls, yet will ſtill honour Chriſt's abuſed Ordinance.

2. Some think the common profeſſion of Chriſtianity makes them Chriſtians enough. They are no *Heathens*, *Mahometans*, or idolatrous *Papiſts*, but *Proteſtants*, within the Pale of the True Church, that is, profeſſed reformed Chriſtians.

But Friends, I beg you to conſider, that convictive Text, 1 *Cor.* 4. 20. *The Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power*. Many there be, that in *words* confeſs Chriſt, but in *works* they deny him. And why were the fooliſh *Virgins* (that is, profeſſed reformed Chriſtians) ſhut out of the Kingdom of God, if the Lamps of verbal profeſſion, without the Oyl of Internal Godlineſs, were enough for our Salvation? *Mat.* 25. 3, 12. Believe it, Sirs, many will claim acquaintance with Chriſt upon this account, and expect favour from him in the great day, of whom he will profeſs he never knew them, *Mat.* 7. 22. Chriſt need not have put men upon ſtriving as in an Agony to enter in at the ſtrait Gate, if Baptiſm in our Infancy, or Verbal Profeſſion of Chriſtianity were all the difficulties

ficulties men had to encounter in the way to Heaven.

3. *Formality in external Duties of Religion*, is another fatal mistake of Conversion. Have not these been the inward thoughts of your hearts; As bad as we are, though we take liberty to swear, be drunk, and unclean sometimes; yet we say our Prayers, keep our Church, and hope for Heaven and Salvation, as well as those that are more precise?

But tell me, *Gentlemen*, seriously, What do you say or plead for your selves more in all this, than those convicted Hypocrites did, *Isa.* 58. 2. *Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a Nation that did Righteousness, and forsook not the Ordinances of their God: They ask of me the Ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.* Or to come nearer yet to your Case, and cut off at one stroke for ever this vain Plea of yours, read and ponder God's own Censure of it, in *Jer.* 7. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. *Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit: Will ye steal, murder, commit Adultery, and swear falsly,* &c. *and come and stand before me in this House, which is called by my Name, and say we are delivered to do all these Abominations? Is this House which is called by my Name, become a Den of Robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord; but go ye now to my place, which was in Shilo, where I set my Name at the first, and see what I did to it, for the wickedness of my people Israel.*

SECT.

SECT. V.

Of the Nature of true Converſion.

YOU have heard that Converſion does not conſiſt in theſe External things; at your Eternal peril be it if you truſt in them. But true Converſion is the turning of the whole man to God, *Acts* 26. 18. 'Tis nothing leſs than the total change of the inward temper and frame of the Heart, and the external courſe of the Life, *Iſa.* 55. 8. 'Tis not the cold *Confeſſion*, but the real forſaking of ſin, in which we ſhall find mercy, *Prov.* 28. 13. Thy heart and will, love and delight muſt turn ſin out, and take Chriſt in, or thou art no Goſpel-Convert. A true Convert loaths every ſin, and himſelf for ſin, *Ezek.* 36. 31. But general Confeſſions of ſin, are conſiſtent with the full dominion of ſin. Moreover, in all true Converſion there is a poſitive turning unto God, a whole heart-choice of him for your ſupreme and ultimate happineſs and portion, *Pſal.* 73. 25. And of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as your Prince and Saviour, *Acts* 5. 31. And anſwerably it will devote your whole Life to his Service and Glory, *Phil.* 1. 21. And thus it brings forth the new man. And the whole Frame of your Heart and Life is marvellouſly changed and altered, 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. *Old things are paſſed away, behold all things are become new.*

It may be you will think ſuch a change as this impoſſible to be made upon you. And ſo it is indeed, until the day of God's powre come, *Pſalm*

110. 3: What! to forſake with loathing your old Companions and Courſes, which you have ſo long lived with, and delighted in, and to embrace with higheſt pleaſure ſtrict Godlineſs, which you have ſo loathed and ridiculed! This would be a ſtrange alteration indeed. But as ſtrange as it ſeems to be, 'twill be effected in a moment, when God fulfils that gracious Promiſe (as I hope he is now doing) to you, *Ezek.* 36. 26. *A new heart alſo will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you*; Operations follow Natures. When the heart of a Beaſt was given to that great King *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Dan.* 5. 21. his dwelling was with the wild Aſſes, they fed him with Graſs like Oxen. But let the Spirit of a man return to him again, and he'll bluſh to think of his brutiſh Company, and way of Life: And ſo will you of yours alſo. As marvellous a change as this has paſt upon as eminent and notorious ſinners as your ſelves, *Gal.* 1. 22. the God of the Spirits of all fleſh can with eaſe and ſpeed produce all this by that Almighty Power whereby he is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf.

SECT. VI.

Of the Hizards attending Converſion.

IF the Lord ſhall in his rich grace and mercy to your Souls ſtir up in them the thoughts and reſolutions of a change of your courſe, great care ought to be taken in the time of this change, leſt they miſcarry in their remove from one State to another. Multitudes miſcarry betwixt a State of Prophane-

Prophaneneſs, and true Godlineſs. To continue in the State of Prophaneneſs, is to be certainly loſt; and ſo it is to take up ſhort of Chriſt in meer Civility and Formality in Religion. This middle ſtate takes up multitudes by the way, who do but change the open Road for a more private way to Hell.

Meer Civilized Nature is Unregenerated Nature ſtill. *They return, but not to the moſt high; they are like a deceitful Bow*, ſaith the *Prophet*, *Hoſ.* 7. 16. They ſeem to aim at Chriſt and Salvation; but as an Arrow from a weak Bow, it goes not home; or as from a deceitful Bow, it ſlents aſide, and miſſes the Mark. 'Tis true, they are not openly prophane, as they were before; but they take up, and ſettle in an Unregenerate State ſtill. Their *Condition* is the ſame, tho their *Company* be not.

This is excellently ſet forth by our Saviour, *Matt.* 12. 43, 44, 45. The Devil may be caſt out as a *prophane* Devil, and yet keep his propriety ſtill as a *formal* Devil. The ſenſe of that Text is well expreſſed by one in this Note upon it, That a reſtraint by Formality keeps the Devil's Propriety, and diſpoſes the Soul to final Apoſtacy. You are as far from Chriſt and Salvation under the power of Formality, as you were before. He that's cured of a Fever, hath no great cauſe to rejoyce, if his *Fever* have left him under a *Conſumption*, which will kill him as ſurely, though it may be leſs violently or ſpeedily.

SECT.

SECT. VII.

Of the abſolute Neceſſity of a thorow Change.

WHatever the Difficulties and Hazards be that attend this Change by Converſion unto God, the Change it ſelf is abſolutely and indiſpenſibly neceſſary to every man's Salvation. The Door of Salvation can never be opened without the Key of Regeneration. Chriſt aſſures Civil and Formal *Nicodemus*, that except he be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God, *Joh.* 3. 3. Think not Converſion to be the attainment of ſome ſingular and extraordinary Chriſtians; for 'tis the very point upon which every man's eternal Happineſs or Miſery depends. There is one Law for all the world, They muſt be changed or damned. No Reſtitutions or Reformations, no common Gifts or Abilities, no Religious Duties or Services, can ſave any man from Hell without a Change by thorough Converſion, *Rom.* 8. 8. *They that are in the fleſh, cannot pleaſe God.*

Satisfie and pleaſe not your ſelves with this; Though we live in ſin, yet God is a merciful God; we will confeſs our ſins to him, ſay our Prayers, keep our Church, and no doubt, but God will be merciful to us, as well as others. Conſider it, man, that this *merciful God* is alſo a *God of Truth*, and this God of Truth hath plainly aſſured thee, That all theſe external things ſignifie nothing to thy Salvation, unleſs thou become a new Creature, *Gal.* 6. 15. And that thou muſt be born again, *John* 3. 3. Say not without this, you will hope

hope in God. If you hope in God, you muſt hope in his Word, *Pſalm* 119. 81. Now where will you find that Word in the Bible, that warrants the hope of Salvation in an unregenerate perſon? All Scriptural hope is of a purifying nature, and evermore productive of an holy life, 1 *John* 3. 3.

If you ſay, Chriſt died for the greateſt of ſinners, and you truſt to be ſaved through him: 'tis true he did ſo; but Converſion is his only method of Salvation, *Tit.* 2. 14. And thoſe that are not waſhed by Sanctification, have no part in him, or in his Blood, *John* 13. 8. He came not to ſave men continuing in their ſins, but to ſave his people from their ſins, *Matt.* 1. 21. His way is to lead you through Sanctification unto Salvation, 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 13. If you have a mind to ſee whom and how he ſaves, you have it before your eyes, *Tit.* 2. 14. *Who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* Thoſe only are ſaved by him, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, live not only *ſoberly* and *righteouſly*, but *godly* in this preſent world.

And this is the Change I am here preſſing you to: and until this change be made, you cannot find your ſelves within the compaſs of any Covenant-Promiſe, *Eph.* 2. 12. But if you will turn to *Heb.* 12. 14. You may the very next minute find your ſelves barr'd out of Heaven by a Scripture-threatning. Let no man therefore impoſe ſo great a cheat upon his own Soul, as once to imagine, that any thing ſhort of ſound Converſion, can ever put him out of the danger of Damnation.

SECT.

SECT. VIII.

Every man might do more than he doth towards his own Converſion.

IT is not in any man's power to convert himſelf: but yet becauſe every man might do more towards it than he doth do, and doth it not, he is juſtly chargeable with his own Damnation. We are bid and bound to ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate, *Luke* 13. 24. 'Tis true, a man in his natural ſtate can do nothing that is ſpiritually or ſupernaturally good; yet he can do, and forbear to do many things, the doing or forbearing of which have a true, though remoter tendency to his Converſion; and not doing or forbearing of them, his Deſtruction is of, and from himſelf.

You can, if you will, forbear to ſwear and blaſpheme the Name of God: who can or does compel or force your tongues to it? The Devil can tempt, but not compel them. You can, if you will, ſtop when nature is duely refreſhed: Your wicked Companions can provoke, but not force you. You can, if you pleaſe, ſhun Laſcivious Books and Company, and keep your Bodies chaſt, at leaſt from the External Acts of Uncleanneſs.

And why cannot you (if you pleaſe) perform, as well as neglect, the external Acts of Religious Duties? The ſame feet that carry you to a Tavern, can carry you to your Cloſets, if you pleaſe to have them do ſo. Nor do I know any reaſon why you cannot compoſe your ſelves, when engaged in

in God's publick or private Worſhip, to a cloſe and ſerious attendance to thoſe Duties. The application of the mind to what is ſpoken, is of great concernment to you: And if an unſanctified Miniſter can apply his thoughts to compoſe a Sermon and preach it, I ſee no reaſon why an unſanctified Hearer may not alſo compoſe and apply his mind to hear it. And I am paſt all doubt, that ſomething may be done beyond all this. You have ſome power certainly to reflect upon, and conſider what concernment you have in the things you read or hear, and how they agree or diſagree with your experience.

Now if men would but do this (which certainly they have a power to do) though they cannot convert themſelves, yet hereby they would lie in the hopeful way of Converting Grace; which is more than they could ever yet be perſwaded to do. And though there be no poſitive certainty or aſſurance that Converſion and Salvation ſhall follow theſe Acts; yet hope and probability are engagements enough. Hope ſets all the World on work without Aſſurance. The *Plough-man* ploughs in hope, and the *Merchant* ventures in hope. Do but as much for your Souls, as theſe do for their Bodies.

SECT.

SECT. IX.

Temptations and Diſcouragements in the way of Converſion.

BUT here I expect to be encountered by all the policy and power of Hell. Satan and your own Luſts are in confederacy to turn away your minds from ſuch Counſels and Perſwaſions as theſe. They will tell you, this is no proper ſeaſon to mind your Converſion: 'tis either too ſoon, or too late. You have not yet had pleaſure enough in ſin, or ſo much as hath put you beyond all hope of mercy: That Religion is a melancholly thing, and if once you look that way, you'l never have a merry day or hour more. With a thouſand ſuch damps and diſcouragements.

But pray, Gentlemen, do ſo much at leaſt for your Souls before you turn away your ear from the inſtructions of life, as to hear theſe matters examined. If they be not worth that, they are worth nothing.

I will ſuppoſe you in the flower and vigour of your Youth, and this dangerous ſeaſon now nick'd with a more dangerous Temptation, that it is too ſoon to mind ſuch ſerious Matters now: You have not yet had your full pleaſure out of ſin.

Need I to ſpend a word to refute and baffle ſuch a Temptation as this? I doubt not but you your ſelves can eaſily do it. Ask your ſelves, Sirs, if ſentence of Death were paſs'd upon you by Men (as it is by God, *John* 3. 18. *He that believeth not is condemned already*) would you think a Pardon could

could come too ſoon? Be aſſured every bit of Bread you eat, is the Bread of the Condemned. You are in hazard of Hell every day and hour: There wants nothing but a Sword, a Bullet, a Shipwrack, or Diſeaſe (of which Multitudes wait on you every day) to put you beyond mercy, and all hopes of mercy. And can you get too ſoon (think you) out of this danger and miſery? Oh, why do you linger any longer? The danger is too great and imminent to admit one hours longer delay.

And it is as ſtrange and ſtrong a deluſion on the other ſide, to fancy it is now too late. The vanity and groundleſneſs of this hath been evinced in the *Second Seſſion*, to which I refer you for full ſatisfaction.

And for the loſs of your Pleaſures by Converſion to God, that's the thinneſt and ſillieſt Pretence of all the reſt. That's the ſame thing as to imagine it is to a Thirſty Man's loſs, to leave the puddle-waters of a broken Ciſtern, to enjoy the Criſtal Streams of a flowing Fountain: For the Pleaſures of an Ale-houſe, Play-houſe or Whore-houſe, to be ſweeter than the light of God's Countenance, the Comforts of his Pardon, or the lively Hopes of Glory with him in Heaven, of which you read, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8.

Poor men! O that you did but once know what the Life of Holineſs, and Dedication to God is; what the Seals, Earneſt, and firſt Fruits of his Spirit are! how willingly and joyfully would you trample all the ſordid Pleaſures of Sin under your feet, to enjoy them!

SECT:

SECT. X.

Motives and Conſiderations perſwading to Converſion.

THIS ſhort Diſcourſe ſhall wind up it ſelf in Motives and Conſiderations to prevail with You, not onely to make the firſt Step out of Prophaneneſs to Civility; but the other neceſſary and happy Step too, for the Lord's ſake, Gentlemen; that bleſſed Step beyond meer Civility, to ſerious Godlineſs.

Oh, that I knew what Words to chuſe, and what Arguments to urge, that might poſſibly prevail with you! My Witneſs is in Heaven, I would do any thing within my power to procure your temporal and eternal Happineſs. I beg you in the bowels of Chriſt Jeſus, as if I were upon my bended knees before your feet, turn not away your eye or ear from theſe Diſcourſes. Ponder and conſider once and again what hath been rationally debated in the Firſt Part, about your Reformation, and what hath and ſhall be offered in this *Second Part.*

" *Oh, my God! thou that haſt counted me faithful,*
" *and put me into the Miniſtry; thou that haſt inclined*
" *my heart to make this attempt, and encouraged me*
" *with hope that it ſhall not be in vain to all them that*
" *read it, if it muſt be ſo to ſome; I beſeech thee, lay*
" *the hand of thy Spirit upon the heart and hand of*
" *thy Servant, ſtrengthen and guide him in drawing*
" *the Bow of the Goſpel, and directing the Arrows,*

" *that*

" that they may ſtrike the Mark he aims at, even the " Conviction and Converſion of lewd and diſſolute ſin- " ners. Command theſe Conſiderations to ſtay and ſettle " in their hearts, till they bring them fully over to thy " ſelf in Chriſt.

I. *Conſideration.*

And firſt, O that you would conſider how the whole of your Life paſt hath been caſt away in vain, as to the great end and buſineſs you came into the world for. You have breathed many Years, but not lived one Day to God. Your Conſciences could never yet prevail with you to get out of the noiſe and hurry of the World, and go along with it into ſome private retiring-place to debate the ſtate of your Souls, and think cloſe (but for one hour) to ſuch awful Subjects as God, Soul, Chriſt and Eternity, Heaven, Hell, Death and Judgment. Do you think, Gentlemen, that you came into this world to do nothing elſe but to eat and drink, ſport and play, ſleep and die? Ask your ſelves, I beſeech you, whether the life you have hitherto lived, have looked to your own eyes like an earneſt flight from Hell, and a ſerious purſuit of Heaven and Salvation? How much nearer are you got to Chriſt now, than you were when in your Cradles? The ſweeteſt and fitteſt part of your life is paſt away in Vanity, and there's no calling one day or hour of it back again.

II. *Conſideration.*

Conſider, Gentlemen, for Chriſt Jeſus ſake, you have yet an opportunity to be eternally happy, if you will ſlight and neglect opportunities of Salvation no longer. The Door of mercy is not yet finally ſhut up. The Lord Jeſus yet waits to be gracious to you. Such is his aſtoniſhing grace and mercy, he will pardon and paſs by all that you have done againſt him; if now after all you will but come unto him that you may have life. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die? Your Swearing and Blaſpheming, your Drunkenneſs, Uncleanneſs and Enmity at Godlineſs, ſhall never be mentioned, if you will yet repent and return, *Ezek.* 18.21,22. *If the wicked will turn from all his ſins that he hath committed, and keep all my Statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſurely live, he ſhall not die. All his tranſgreſſions that he hath committed, they ſhall not be mentioned unto him.*

If you ſay, theſe are hard and impoſſible terms to Nature. 'Tis true they are ſo; and God's end in urging them here upon you, is to convince you of your natural impotence, and drive you to Chriſt, that by union with him, the righteouſneſs of the Law might be fulfilled in you.

III. *Conſideration.*

Let it be throughly conſidered, 'Tis no leſs than Salvation, and your own Salvation too, which depends upon your Converſion. How diligent was Chriſt in purchaſing Salvation! How negli-

negligent and remiſs are we in applying it! Oh, what compoſitions of ſloth and ſtupidity are unconverted Sinners! How do they ſit with folded arms, as if it were eaſy to periſh? Is this your running and ſtriving to obtain the Palms and Crowns of Immortal Glory? *Work out* (ſaith the Apoſtle *Phil.* 2.12,13.) *your own ſalvation with fear and trembling.* 'Tis for Salvation, and nothing leſs, you are here preſſed to ſtrive And what care, pains, or ſolicitude of ours can be equal and proportionate to ſo great a thing as ſalvation? If every thought of the heart were reſcued from all other concerns, and the mind ſtand continually fixed with utmoſt intention upon this Subject, ſurely ſuch a Subject deſerves it all, and much more.

But when you conſider it is not an other's, but your own Salvation you are ſtriving for, how powerfully ſhould the Principle of Self-preſervation awaken and invigorate your utmoſt endeavours after it! The Law of Charity and Bowels of Mercy would compel us to do much to ſave the Body, and much more the Soul of another; and will they move us to do nothing for our own Salvation?

Say not, if I ſhould be careleſs and neglective, yet God is good and gracious; if this Seaſon be neglected, there be more to come. Alas! that's more than you know. 'Tis poſſible your Eternal Happineſs may depend upon the improvement of this preſent opportunity. There's much of time in a ſhort opportunity.

IV. *Conſideration.*

Do you think your hearts would be in ſuch a dead, careleſs and unconcerned frame, about this

great and awful matter of your Converſion and Salvation, if thoſe things were now before your eyes, which certainly and ſhortly muſt be before them?

How rational and neceſſary is it for you now to ſuppoſe thoſe very things, as preſent before you, which you know to be near you, and a few Days or Hours will make preſent? Here let me make a few Suppoſitions, ſo rational, becauſe certainly future and near, that no wiſe man will or dare to ſlight them as Fictions or *Chimera's*.

I. *Suppoſition.*

Suppoſe your ſelves now upon your Death-beds, your heart and breath failing, your eye and heart-ſtrings breaking, all Earthly Comforts failing and ſhrinking from you; Theſe things, you know, are unavoidable, and muſt ſhortly befall you, *Eccleſ.* 8. 8. Suppoſe alſo in theſe your laſt Extremities, your Conſciences ſhould awake (as probably they will, there being now no more Charms of Pleaſure, and ſinful Companions to divert or ſtupifie them) what a caſe will you then find your ſelves in! What a cold ſweat will then lie upon your panting boſoms! What a pale horror will appear in your countenances? Will you not then wiſh, Oh that the time I have ſpent in vanity, had been ſpent in the Duties of ſerious Piety! Oh that I had been as careful of my Soul as I was of my Body! What are the pains of Mortification, which I was ſo afraid of, to the pains of Damnation, which I begin to ſcent and apprehend! I thought it hard to pray, mourn, and deny my

ſelf

ſelf, but I ſhall find it harder to grapple with the Wrath of an incenſed God to all Eternity.

II. *Suppoſition.*

Suppoſe your ſelves now to be at the Judgment-Seat of God, where you know you muſt be immediately after Death; or that you did behold the Proceſs and awful ſolemnity of the general Judgment of the great Day, both which appearances are indiſputably ſure and certain, *Heb.* 9. 27. 2 *Cor.* 5. 10. Suppoſe you ſaw all *Adam's* Poſterity there aſſembled and convened, even Multitudes, Multitudes, which no man can number; all theſe ſeparated into two grand Diviſions; Chriſt the Supream and final Judge upon the Judgment-Seat, the Chriſtleſs and Unregenerate World quivering at the Bar, the laſt Sentence pronouncing on them, the Executioners ſtanding ready to take them away: will you not then (think you) be ready to tear your ſelves with indignation for this your ſupine and ſottiſh careleſneſs? A Voice from the Throne, like the Voice of a Trumpet, ſounds a loud Alarm to all Careleſs, Negligent and Trifling Sinners; and this is the Voice, if you will not be in the ſame caſe with the miſerable condemned World. Put to it heartily then in the uſe of all means with God and Men, for converting and regenerating Grace *now*, which is the only thing that differences your ſtate from thoſe miſerable Wretches *then*.

III. Sup-

III. *Supposition.*

Suppose God did but give you a fore-sight or fore-taste in the Terrors of your Consciences of that Damnation you have jested at, and so often imprecated upon your selves; did you but lie one Night in that Plight poor *Spira* and many others beside him have done, with the terrors of the Lord upon your spirits, under horror and remorse of Conscience, which are the first niblings and bitings of that Worm that shall never die,

——— Tum pallida mens est,
Criminibus, tacitâ sudant præcordia culpâ.

Paleness and horror, fear and trembling upon the outward and inward man, whilst God is making the immediate impressions of his wrath upon the Conscience; seeming to want some one to let out that miserable wretched Soul, that is weary to stay any longer in the Body, and yet afraid to be dislodged, lest its Condition be made worse by the exchange; do you think you would ever imprecate Damnation any more? and yet all these terrors and horrors upon the Conscience are but as the sweating of *Marble*-Stones before the great Rain fall.

But what if God should give you a Vision of Hell it self, and of the inconceivable and unexpressible misery of those desperate and forlorn Wretches, that lie there sweltring and groaning under the heavy pressures of the wrath of a great and terrible God, immediately and everlastingly transacted upon their Souls? would you ever jest with Damnation any more, as with an harmless

thing?

thing? Nay, would you not ſtrive to the uttermoſt to flee from this wrath to come? Do you not ſeem to hear in this rational and juſt Suppoſition, a doleful Cry coming from Hell, and the ſtate of the Damned, with this very Sound and Senſe; Good Souls, if ever you expect to be delivered from this ſtate and place of Torments, ſtrive to the utmoſt, ſtrive while you have opportunity, ſtrive whilſt breath and ſtrength do laſt, to flee from, and eſcape by ſound Converſion this doleful ſtate of Eternal Damnation.

IV. *Suppoſition.*

Laſtly, and in a word; Suppoſe you had a Viſion of Heaven, as *Stephen* and *Paul* had in the Body; ſuppoſe you ſaw the Glory of God, and Jeſus ſtanding at his right hand, ſurrounded with the triumphant *Myriads* of Palm-bearing Saints, ſinging *Hoſanna's* and *Alleluiah's* to God and the Lamb for ever, and bleſſing, praiſing and admiring him, that gave them another ſpirit vaſtly different from that which governs ſuch as you; bleſſing the Lord that enabled them to be praying and praiſing, whilſt others were curſing and ſwearing; to be ſighing and groaning for ſin in ſecret, whilſt others were ſhouting and ſinging in Taverns and Ale-houſes; to beat down their Bodies, and keep them under, whilſt others were pleaſing and gratifying their Luſts; would you ſtill drive that courſe you do? Well, Sirs, if ever you expect to come where theſe bleſſed ones are, you muſt take the courſe they did. Let this be your endeavour, and it ſhall be my fervent and hearty Prayer.

FINIS.

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